

**Schroader, Kathy**



**From:** Orjiako, Oliver  
**Sent:** Friday, June 17, 2016 9:04 AM  
**To:** Albrecht, Gary, Alvarez, Jose, Anderson, Colete, Euler, Gordon, Hermen, Matt, Kamp, Jacqueline, Lebowsky, Laurie, Lumbantobing, Sharon, Orjiako, Oliver, Schroader, Kathy, Wiser, Sonja  
**Cc:** steve.djulio@foster.com  
**Subject:** FW: Follow up from yesterday's meeting  
**Attachments:** DRAFT--Farm resilience research SUMMARY by Jude Wait 13 June 2016--DRAFT f2s.pdf, Data on Food and Farming in Clark Co compiled December 2014 (002).pdf

FYI and for the record. Thanks

---

**From:** Heather [mailto:htischbein@wa-net.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 17, 2016 8:57 AM  
**To:** Olson, Julie (Councilor); Boldt, Marc  
**Cc:** Orjiako, Oliver; Euler, Gordon; Stewart, Jeanne  
**Subject:** FW: Follow up from yesterday's meeting

Councilors Olson and Boldt,

I am submitting this email for the record for consideration in your GMA deliberations on June 21, 2016.

As part of a group of stakeholders from Friends of Clark County, I had the opportunity to meet with Councilor Stewart on Monday regarding our concerns that

1. The Council appears to be seriously considering allowing further divisions of rural and resource lands (Rural 1 b-1 d on Planning Commission Decision Table),
2. If the Council rejects the Planning Commission recommendations and allows for further division of these lands, there is a substantial likelihood that some landowners will immediately submit development applications for all their affected lands,
3. Those development applications will vest the parcel divisions and, thus, even if the Growth Management Board finds that the divisions are non-compliant and/or issues an Order of Invalidation, the protection of agricultural lands will already have been defacto removed because every land division that has vested cannot be "invested" and any remand for compliance would be moot,
4. The rural map (Rural 1 a on the Planning Commission Decision Table) will allow a shift from the higher level of scrutiny of a Type IV review process to a Type III review process for any application from a single landowner requesting to subdivide lands, and
5. The funding shortfall built into the Capital Facilities Plan is a non-starter.

You will see from the email below that I sent to Council Stewart as follow up to the meeting on Monday, and that I am forwarding to you today, that I had come prepared to share some materials with her that speak to the importance of protecting and preserving agricultural land for food production. I am now submitting this information to you for the record.

In addition to the references cited in the email below, I am also submitting two additional references, linked immediately below, about the important role that local organic food production plays in economic development and the economic vitality and resilience of communities. As the Comprehensive Plan is future-oriented, it is imperative, in my

opinion, that staff, elected officials and citizens make informed policy choices based on the best information available at the time, information that helps us understand not only how the past can inform the future but to also understand how what is already known and can be anticipated can inform the design of our preferred community future. As I understand the intent and goals of the GMA, “our” and “future” are the operative concepts.

<https://www.ota.com/news/press-releases/19049>

[https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/local-organic-food-farming-can-help-revitalize-economy#V2FrX2j8Esg\\_email](https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/local-organic-food-farming-can-help-revitalize-economy#V2FrX2j8Esg_email)

Thank you for your hard work and due diligence. Navigating that rapids of change is not for the fainthearted.

Heather Tischbein

**From:** Heather [<mailto:htischbein@wa-net.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2016 9:15 AM  
**To:** 'jeanne.stewart@clark.wa.gov' <[jeanne.stewart@clark.wa.gov](mailto:jeanne.stewart@clark.wa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Follow up from yesterday's meeting

Jeanne,

It was good to see you yesterday. Thank you for listening so carefully to our concerns 1) about the “vesting” (land rush) possibilities inherent in the upsizing and clustering elements of the proposed alternative if the “effective date” of the adoption is not put far enough out into 2017 to allow the GMHB to deal with all the anticipated petitions and appeals (or better yet that these elements are not included at all per the Planning Commission recommendations) and 2) about the funding shortfall built into the CFP.

I had come prepared to share some materials with you that speak to why preserving/protecting ag land matters over the long term to economic development prospects and community well-being in addition to the environmental benefits of protecting clean water and air and wildlife habitats. Across the nation, and the globe, systems change re food production and distribution value and supply chains is already happening. The risks factors associated with our conventional, “industrial” food system are becoming ever more apparent and the role that local food systems do and can play in building resilience into our food system are also becoming more apparent. Paradigm shifts are happening in people’s thinking and doing on the ground. So I had brought some materials that I thought might help you see a “bigger picture” of how what’s happening here connects to what’s happening at state and federal levels as well and why it is so important to protect our resource and rural lands for food production while we can to protect the resources we will need to make the adaptive changes we can see coming and to retain options in the face of changes we don’t yet anticipate.

So, here’s my attempt to share via email what I’d hoped to share face-to-face yesterday.

***Why preserving rural and resource lands for local food production, as the core foundation of a thriving, robust local food system, matters in Clark County now and for the future...making decisions today for the future “we” want 20-100 years, seven generations out.***

What follows is a kind of “connect the dots” narrative for the larger context in which our important land use decisions are being made, starting from the ground up literally.

**A. Consistent with the GMA intentions, goals and requirements, The Planning Commission Decision Table on page 4 indicates a 6-1 approval of section 7b: "Chapter 4 Environmental Element"**

- i the goal of *"Promote the advancement of energy efficiency green building, waste reduction, composting and recycling, solar and renewable energy use and local sustainable food production"*
- ii the policy of *"Clark County is committed to fostering a safe, secure future that conserves natural resources while meeting basic human needs, including clean water, air and food, along with shelter, education, and employment This commitment to a sustainable future will be a key consideration in making public policy, developing public programs, operating public facilities, and delivering public services"*
- iii the strategies of
  - a *"Lead by example,*
  - b *Encourage innovation in both public and private pursuits,*
  - c *Promote and demonstrate efficient and effective use of renewable and consumable resources,*
  - d *Collaborate with public and private partners on projects aimed at sustainability,*
  - e *Continuously enhance our perspective and expertise in making sustainable choices on behalf of the citizens and communities of Clark County, and identify and pursue new opportunities that promote sustainable practices"*

**B** In order to align with and realize the goal and policy outcome and suggested strategies cited above, the Planning Commission recommended against "up-sizing" of rural and resource lands and against "clustering", as these policy options/tools are well-understood from both the on-the-ground experience of farm and forest producers and the economic analysis of academic researchers to increase development pressure on rural and resource lands and thus negatively affect the economic vitality and viability of food and forest production, especially in rapidly developing "Rural-Urban Interface" counties such as Clark County

On page 1 of the Decision Table Section 1. Rural indicates that the Planning Commission **denied by a 5-2 vote the two policy options that "up-size" the minimum lot size for AG-20 and FOREST-40 and thus create more, smaller parcels**

On page 4 of the Decision Table Section 7a. Chapter 2 Rural and Natural Resource Element indicates that the Planning Commission **denied by a 6-1 vote the two policy options that allow for "clustering" on forest and agricultural lands**

On pages 10-11 of the Decision Table Section 7g. Title 40 Clark County Unified Development Code Amendments, sections i. A and B indicate that the Planning Commission **denied by a 7-0 vote code changes that would support "up-sizing" ag and forest land parcels and that would create requirements for clustering options and codify proposed land divisions.**

**C.** The Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update, version 8.1 ends on page 13 with a final paragraph on the rationale for preparing a supplemental EIS to the 2007 Comp Plan EIS Many have testified to the inadequacy of the supplemental EIS prepared for this update in terms of the comprehensiveness of its analysis and findings, including the lack of information on the cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed options Significant in its absence is a calculation of the total number of acres of ag land that would be at risk of development if the impacts of de-designation of 600 acres of ag land to a Rural Industrial Land Bank were also factored into the analysis (Also not included in the impact analysis, to my knowledge, is information on development projects "in the pipeline" but not yet on the ground, so the actual number acres at risk of development, at risk of loss to ag production, are not counted anywhere ) And the Supplemental EIS is just that, an environmental impact analysis

Nowhere that I have found has there been a formal economic impact analysis on current and future farming viability factors, nor any scenario planning that would illuminate issues and educate the public to the long term pros and cons that by design increase, decrease or hold steady existing development pressure on ag land

**D. The Planning Commission recommendations cited here are consistent with the intent and purpose of the GMA to protect and conserve agriculture and forest land (resource lands), and taken as a whole these recommendations are**

***internally consistent as a planning document. I urge the County Council to accept the Planning Commission recommendations as they hold the promise of preventing additional development pressure being put on resource lands and thus conserving our remaining food production capacity for the future.***

E. Several local, state and federal reports exist that taken together create a context for why preserving our agricultural lands and purposefully supporting local farmers to produce for a local food system make sense for our future in a variety of ways. Around the country and the world entire curricula, research projects, community economic development projects, local, state and federal government programs, and innovation incubator enterprises have been designed and implemented to address the economic, environmental, public health and social justice benefits of local food systems. Unfortunately, the depth and breadth of this information and experience is not widely known in Clark County, especially when it comes to planning for land use and economic development. In my opinion, we are clearly at risk of making choices today that will preclude options for the future, options that we can already project we would want to protect as possibilities in certain scenarios, especially certain risk assessment scenarios.

Little, if any, of this information has been included in our comp plan deliberations. In fact, some have even suggested precluding pertinent existing information on purpose. At a minimum, the recommendations made by citizen advisory groups such as the Growing Healthy Communities and Aging in Place recommendations should be included.

F. Going beyond the minimum referenced above, the most recent information about agriculture in Clark County was released the week of May 30, 2016, by the Columbia River Economic Development Council, in a report titled Clark County Agriculture From Local Roots to Future Bounty. This report represents a CREDC collaboration with a Leadership Clark County 2016 team to investigate “What is the proper place for agriculture in our local economic development strategy?”—page 2. The LCC team of six volunteers worked for months interviewing stakeholders, conducting a community Opinionnaire survey, and reviewing existing reports to provide the CREDC with some baseline information to help them better understand what “knowledge” is available and how useful it might be, and what information is still needed to best understand the past and present, and to predict and design future possibilities for agriculture in Clark County. A link to the report is here:

[https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3xy-  
uq1pajTzAwMnFsUklmOHc&usp=sharinghttps://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3xy-  
uq1paJtXzAwMnFsUklmOHc&usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3xy-<br/>uq1pajTzAwMnFsUklmOHc&usp=sharinghttps://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3xy-<br/>uq1paJtXzAwMnFsUklmOHc&usp=sharing)

The first 18 pages of the report is the narrative written by the team, including some suggestions for “next steps” on page 16. In my opinion, undertaking these next steps would greatly improve our ability to make land use and planning decisions for our future. Pages 17-18 lists the sources the LCC team considered in their report, with links to the documents. Though some of the links are not currently working, the report authors are working to correct this problem. There is important information in the “Sources” section on pages 17-18, and in the appendices which includes eight relevant reports in their entirety, and the Opinionnaire that was sent to stakeholder groups as part of the project. In Section 5 of the Opinionnaire (no page number indicated) 98% of the 115 respondents agreed with the statement *“I believe our community should design a positive countywide vision for local agriculture as an integral part of Clark County’s identity and economic development strategies.”* The limitations of this particular Opinionnaire are noted in the document narrative, which is why extending the Opinionnaire process is a recommended next step. Taken as a whole, this report represents the most up-to-date compilation of information on the “state of agriculture” in Clark County and gives a snapshot of what kinds of information could and should be included in the county’s decision making re agriculture in our urban-rural community.

G. The findings in this LCC-CREDC document are consistent with the preliminary research findings of Jude Wait, a Ph D candidate in agroecology at WSU-V. Ms. Wait has been studying the resilience factors of farms in Clark County and comparing her findings to what research has already shown about farm resilience in rapidly developing Rural Urban Interface (RUI) counties, which Clark County is identified as by the USDA Economic Research Service’s Urban Influence Code. Attached are both a draft of her preliminary results, and a compilation of data. Her work cannot be construed as representing WSU, but there are references to published WSU research.

H. At the state level, the WA State Food System Roundtable—Draft Prospectus reflects the preliminary results of an executive order issued in 2010 by former Gov. Christine Gregoire directing state agencies “to examine state food policy food-related programs and food-related issues”—page 5. From page 7: “A collective approach is needed where linkages between food production, natural resources, personal and population health, economic vitality and social equity are considered together. Specifically the Roundtable has two purposes: 1. Develop and ensure stewardship of a 25-year vision, including specific goals and actionable strategies; 2. Facilitate effective collaboration, problem solving and shared learning across all food system stakeholders.” Though the WA State Food System Roundtable recommendations don’t have the force of law as the GMA does, their statewide goals are certainly consistent with the GMA’s in terms of preserving ag lands and our ag economy (both for export and local markets). And it seems to me that paying attention to and seeking opportunities for alignment and collaboration with state level endeavors makes sense, including taking advantage of state grant monies for food system initiatives when appropriate.

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3xy-uq1paJtXzAwMnFsUklmOHc&usp=sharing>  
<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3xy-uq1paJtXzAwMnFsUklmOHc&usp=sharing>

I. At the federal level the USDA recently published Economics of Local Food Systems: A Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions. This document acknowledges local food systems as an emerging and beneficial trend in agriculture and suggests a model for how communities can systematically initiate a community-based economic assessment and/or planning process to evaluate the pros and cons, whys and wherefores of integrating the development of a local food system into larger economic development strategies. Our local Food System Council made an initial food system assessment with the 2007 Globalwise report, Analysis of the Agricultural Trends and Conditions in Clark County, Washington and the two 2008 reports, Exploring the Clark County Food System, by Amy Gilroy and the Food and Farm Economy of Clark County by Ken Meter, all cited and linked in the LCC-CREDC report. Our community would be well served in its comprehensive planning by having an up-dated food system assessment and by convening a community-wide design conversation to create a vision and action plan for developing a local agriculture-food system that will best serve Clark County 20 or more years into the future. The county council is now in the difficult position of having to try to plan for our future in the absence of integrated, comprehensive, and up-to-date information on what is happening right now in terms of agriculture in Clark County and what is possible, if we had strong public agreement and support for a vision of the future we want.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Toolkit%20Designed%20FINAL%203-22-16.pdf>

J. The National Good Food Network, a collaboration based out of the Wallace Center in Little Rock, AR is another valuable resource for information on the track record of success and failure of local food system development endeavors in communities across the country.

<http://ngfn.org/>

K. And just for fun—for possibility thinking—here’s a link to an article from the Seattle Times about what Costco is doing to work with farmers to try to stabilize their supply chain for organic fruits and vegetables. I contacted their vice president for “grocery” in the Kirkland corporate offices to see if they might have an interest in developing a project on the Lagler-Ackerlund property. Mr. Frank Padilla graciously explained that he had his hands full working with the farmers they already work with. However, he also said that if “someone” came to them with a project proposal (and believable business plan) for an ag project on the RILB 600 acres, he would certainly listen. To me, this is an indication that we have barely scratched the surface of what future possibilities exist for us in Clark County.

<http://www.seattletimes.com/business/retail/costco-gets-creative-to-meet-shoppers-huge-appetite-for-organics/>

L. In closing, there is no shortage of information that could inform our thinking here in Clark County. And we do need better information with which to make our deliberations and design our preferred future—for local agriculture and for the community of Clark County.

I hope I have been somewhat successful in giving you a sense of what a bigger picture can look like so that you may have a stronger platform from which to advocate for comp plan updates that will protect and enhance the vitality of local farms and that will safeguard future options for integrating the building out of a local food system infrastructure from producer-to-consumer as part of our larger economic development strategies

Please choose to adopt the *Planning Commission* recommendations and do not adopt any elements that will lead to creating more and smaller parcels on rural and resource lands and/or that will allow for clustering of house sites. Please honor the county's sustainability commitment and make sure all adopted elements are consistent with that commitment. As we discussed yesterday, please consider making the policy recommendations you do adopt effective in 2017, February 2017 perhaps, to give the people and the process the time necessary to come to appropriate resolution of differences and to prevent the vesting of parcel divisions in the interim between adoption of the plan and resolution of the petitions and appeals. Please take a look at the LCC-CREDC report and see what this team of neutral volunteers discovered about what we know and don't know and might want to know in order to develop and implement the best possible policy options to conserve, preserve and even enhance our ability to develop a thriving, resilient local food system as integral to our overall economic development strategies

And please keep up your good work

Heather Tischbein

## **Economic Significance of Food and Farming in Clark County:**

Summary of select data, primarily from the 2012 Census of Agriculture

### **→ Jobs, Sales, Income, Growing Demand, and Food Security**

- **Food and Farm Product Sales of More Than \$475 Million**

The Washington State Department of Agriculture reports that Clark County's food processing industry generated **1,029 jobs** to attain gross sales of \$364 million in 2012—with milk, fryers, and berries the top three products <sup>1</sup>

The total market value of crops and livestock sold by Clark County farms was \$50.9 million—with 37% or \$18.9 million from crop sales and \$32 million from livestock sales (63%), according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture (COA) <sup>11</sup> In addition, 384 of the farms reported additional gross income from farm-related sources, totaling nearly \$6 million—including \$249,000 from agri-tourism and recreational services, and \$1.6 million for forest products (excluding Christmas trees)

Farm expenses totaled \$54.7 million, including \$5.7 million in property taxes, nearly \$1 million for utilities, \$1.3 for repairs, supplies and maintenance, \$2.7 million on fuel, and \$15 million for feed, among other farm production expense categories reported for the 2012 COA

- **More Than 8,850 Food and Farming Jobs**

There are a total of **3,072 farm operators** in Clark County. Hired farm labor is another category in the COA, which reports **2,211 workers**, including 454 migrant workers, for a \$9 million payroll. Contract labor on 178 farms cost farmers nearly \$1 million. There are also **2,476** unpaid workers who are “agricultural workers not on the payroll who performed activities or work on a farm or ranch” <sup>111</sup>

In summary, data show **8,851 food and farming jobs in Clark County**. This figure is more than 7% of the jobs in Clark County in 2012, at a time when there was 10.4% unemployment <sup>111</sup> This is almost as many jobs as the top 8 single largest private employers in Clark County combined. <sup>v</sup>

- **Increasing Demand for Locally Grown Food**

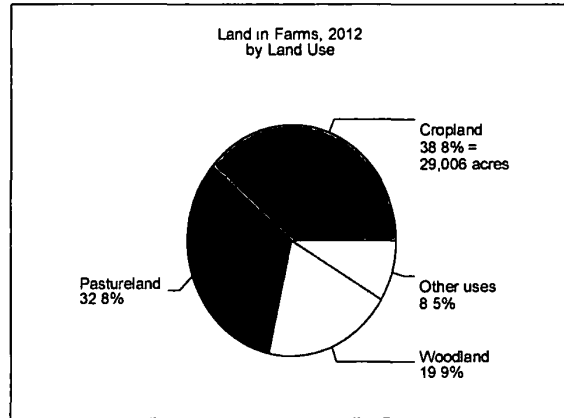
The local direct market sector shows evidence of growth. In 2008, there were 10 CSA farms, 4 farmers' markets, 4 community gardens, and 42 Fruit and Vegetable Stands (Gilroy 2008). In 2014 there were 7 Farmers' Markets. The 2012 COA reports 39 CSA farms, 141 farms producing value-added commodities, 43 farms with on-farm packing facilities, 85 farms selling direct to retail outlets, and 85% of the vegetables grown are “harvested for fresh market” (compared to being harvested for processing) <sup>11</sup> Rotational grazing is practiced on 345 farms. There are 25 farms reporting that they use organic methods, generating a total \$841,000 in sales, with 12 being Certified Organic (2012 COA). There was an 88% increase in the acres of vegetables reported for the COA between 2007 and 2012.

- **Nearly 4 Million Pounds of Food for the Most Food Insecure Citizens**

Additionally, in terms of feeding people, the Food Bank reports having received a total of 3.9 million pounds of food in 2012 in Clark County, where there are 29 food pantries<sup>vii</sup>. More of the Food Bank food is fresh due to their new facility, and local farms and grocery stores are part of the supply chain. At the 78<sup>th</sup> Street Heritage Farm, there are 8 acres under vegetable production just for the Food Bank, alongside crops grown by Veterans. The Community Garden at the Farm has 80 plots, and is only one of the 82 Community Gardens in Clark County—located at schools, churches, senior centers, housing development sites, and County properties<sup>viii</sup>.

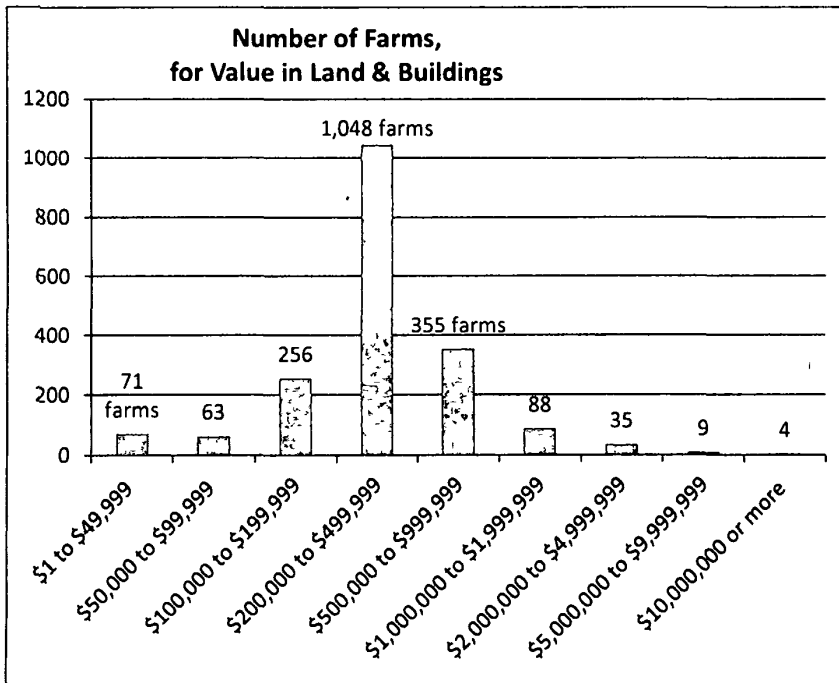
➔ **Farm Land and Crops**

The 2012 COA reports 74,758 acres of Land in Farms, with cropland area of 29,006 acres (38.8%). Of Clark County's total land area, 18.6% is in farms. The total number of farms is 1,929 farms, and the average size is 39 acres.



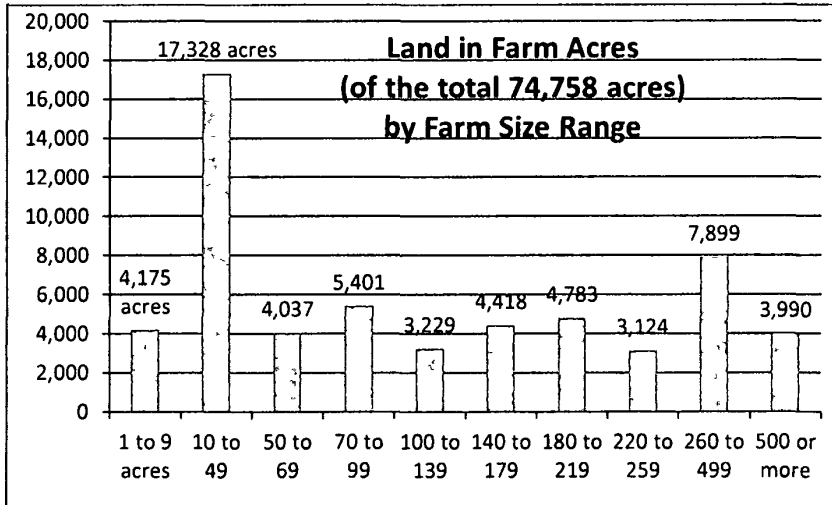
- **Values in Farm Land and Buildings**

The total estimated market value of farm land and buildings in 2012 was \$946 million, for an average of \$12,662 per acre. Farms valued greater than \$200,000 encompass 80% of the farms.

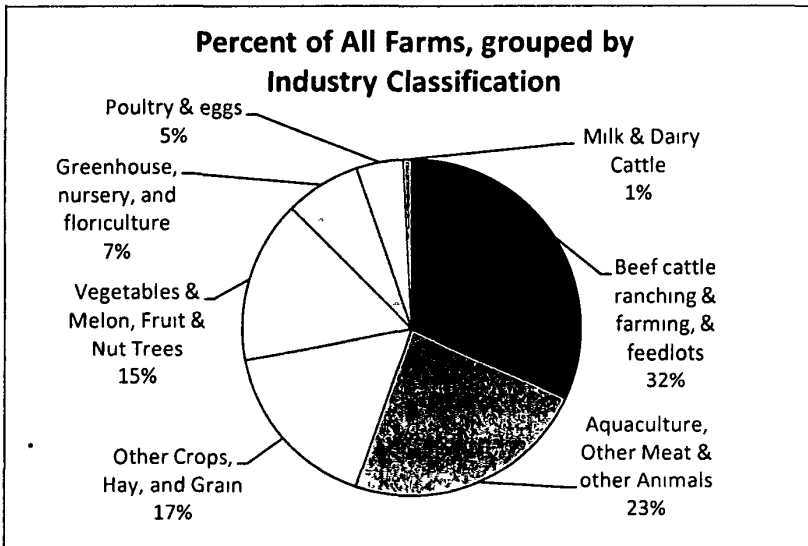




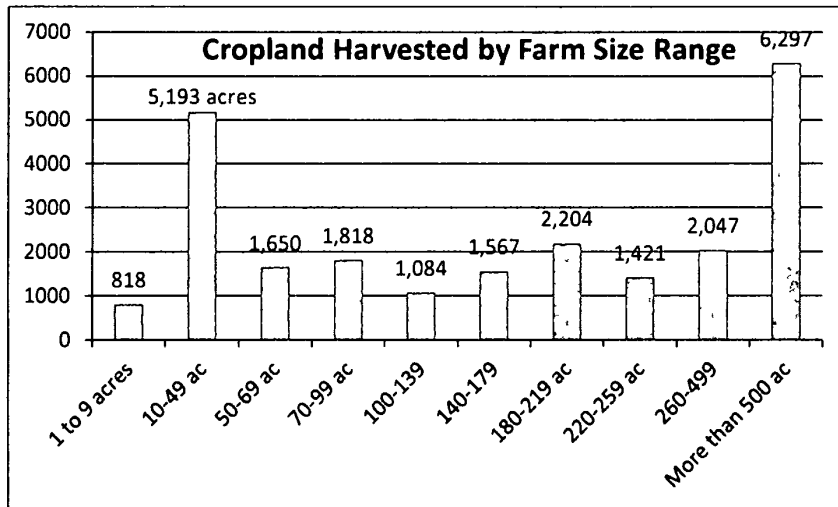
By area, the majority of the farms (86%) are smaller than 50 acres in size, and they encompass approximately 37% of the total Land in Farm area



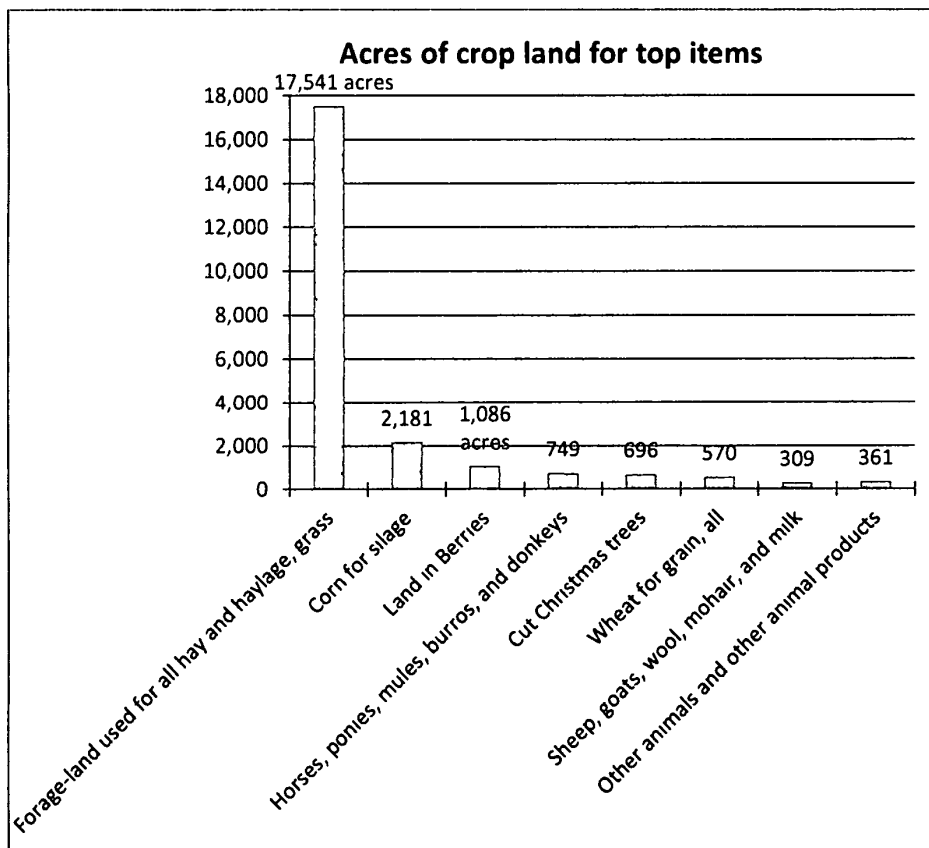
All 1,929 farms were assigned a code for the North American Industry Classification System Together, the meat, dairy, and egg categories, encompass nearly 61% of the farms



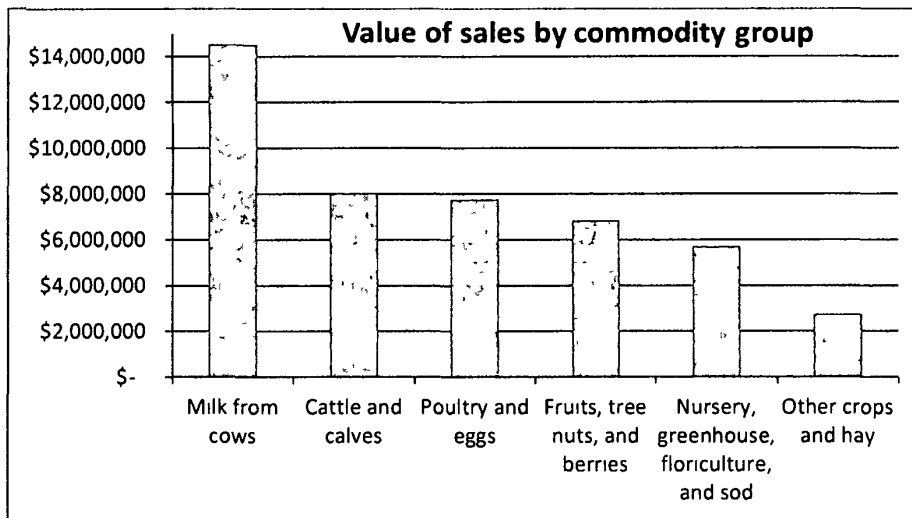
Total cropland **harvested** was 24,099 acres (83% of the cropland), encompassing 1,022 farms (53% of the total number of farms) Of the **cropland harvested**, 25% was from the farms less than 50 acres in size



The top crop items (by acres) are hay and silage corn



Top cropland includes 1,086 acres in berries Berries (including fruits and tree nut trees) are also among the top five commodity items by sales



→ **Farm Operators**

The 2012 COA reports 77% male Principle Operators. Women operate 90% of the farms that only have one operator. Over 90% of all operators are White.

Race of Principle Operator	Number of Operators
American Indian or Alaska Native	33
Asian	33
Black or African American	(there were 5 in 2007) 0
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	5
White	2,953
More than one race	29
All operators of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Origin	82

Of the part-owner operators (9.4% of the total), 73% are operating on rented land (21,501 acres)

Tenure of operators	Number of operators (farms)	Tenure on Land (acres)
Full owners	1,682	41,854
Part owners	182	29,503
Tenants	65	3,401
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,929</b>	<b>74,758</b>

## **References**

Gilroy, A (2008) Exploring the Clark County Food System, a food system assessment sponsored by Steps to a Healthier Clark County, Community Choices, and Clark County Public Health, for the Clark County Food System Council

---

<sup>i</sup> [http://agr.wa.gov/AgInWa/Crop\\_Maps.aspx](http://agr.wa.gov/AgInWa/Crop_Maps.aspx)

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/Washington/](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/)

<sup>iii</sup> COA 2012 Appendix B General Explanation and Census of Agriculture Report Form

<sup>iv</sup> Source Washington State Employment Security Department via <http://gis.clark.wa.gov/gishome/Census/2000/?pid=quickfacts>

<sup>v</sup> Source Vancouver Business Journal's 2013 Book of Lists via <http://gis.clark.wa.gov/gishome/Census/2000/?pid=quickfacts>

<sup>vi</sup> the COA captured 39 CSA farms

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.columbian.com/news/2013/mar/31/food-bank-20-more-of-everything/>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://communitygrown.org/map-of-clark-county-gardens/>

***Food Farm Resilience Research in Clark County:***

**DRAFT--Selected Findings—by Jude Wait'**

This document highlights select findings and research results, based on a review of literature, available agency data, and research with farmers and other food system stakeholders

Evidence compiled for this research suggests that Clark County has a significant and growing local agrifood sector that is facing substantial challenges. Clark County's multi-stakeholder Food System Council is promoting the retention of agricultural land for local food production in a region with significant food insecurity and urban development pressure [FSC 1, 2]

**A) Summary Conclusions**

**To retain and enhance food production capacity for the long term**, we need a strong agrifood system network with organizations that support farming sustainability, in order to

- 1 Develop and support policies favorable to farmland preservation and farm businesses,
- 2 Provide technical expertise and resources for research, education, and implementing better practices on farms and throughout the regional food supply chain, and
- 3 Foster a trained, engaged, and reliable workforce to provide for farm management and labor on farms – including year-round and seasonal opportunities, and facilitate links between available labor and labor needs

In addition, for immediate and longer-term needs, **farmers would benefit from**

- 4 Having access to direct technical assistance, on-farm research, farmer mentors, and agronomic expertise,
- 5 Support from an educated public citizenry and policy-makers,
- 6 Support by an expanded and more dedicated customer base, and
- 7 Support for farmers' individual or collective efforts to enhance their local food farming sector

**B) Clark County is Agriculturally Important (AI)**

Clark County is Agriculturally Important (AI), according to both sales per acre and total sales [using criteria from 3] <sup>ii</sup> Along with half the counties in the U S [4], Clark County is a rural-urban interface (RUI) county <sup>iii</sup> Urban agriculture is broadly defined as “integrated into the urban economic and ecological system” [5] <sup>iv</sup>

Clark County resembles other metro regions in the U S, and is among Western Washington Counties with vibrant local food sectors [6] featuring an expanding direct-to-consumer market sector and new farm businesses that are helping to meet the growing demand associated with access to urban populations [7] Clark County has seven consistent farmers' markets, more than 20 active CSA farms, and innumerable roadside farm stands [more than 40 were mapped for the 2008 food system assessment by 8]

***1) USDA Census of Agriculture for Clark County, Washington, shows:***

- a Among Western Washington counties, <sup>v</sup> Clark County ranks high in percent of area in farms, and number of farms direct-marketing [9]

- b The 2012 Census of Agriculture (USDA, 2012) reports information for Clark County [10],<sup>v</sup> some of which is summarized in the attached document titled “Economic Significance of Food and Farming in Clark County ” The wide diversity of farm size can be seen in the graph of Land in Farms by Farm Size Range, along with the diversity of products (pages 3 and 4)

**2) Challenges to agrifood system resilience for Clark County include:**

- a Clark County is one of the most rapidly urbanizing counties in Washington [11], and is well known for sprawling development [12]
- b Farmland is being converted to housing developments<sup>vii</sup> and roadways are encroaching on active farmland<sup>viii</sup>
- c The prevalence of farms less than 50 acres is not a new nor recent phenomenon, according to historical statistics [13]
- d Clark County is purported to exhibit an agricultural sector in “transition” [13, 14] However, no consistent or current evaluation of Clark County’s agricultural situation was identified, nor is there a comprehensive analysis of the local food system. Information on the farming sector of Clark County has not been updated in recent years,<sup>ix</sup> other than by reference to the 2012 Census of Agriculture
- e The boundaries between rural, resource, and urban areas are indistinct
  - In 2007, 25% of the Clark County’s commercial agricultural land was located within the UGA, and 15% of identified farms were mapped within the 2004 city limits [13]
  - In 2005-2006, 34% of the land inside the Urban Growth Area (UGA) was in forest and agriculture [15]
- f Clark County’s 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update includes one Alternative that would further reduce parcel sizes in rural and agricultural zoning designations Such land use policies are inconsistent with farmland preservation recommendations of State and non-governmental organizations [such as in 6, 16-18]

**C) Research on urban area agriculture in the U.S. shows:**

**1) Farmland for food production is at risk**

- a) Rapid urbanization
  - 1 Farmland in urban-influenced regions produces the majority of vegetables, fruit, nuts, and dairy grown in the United States, but such farms are “in the path of development” [19]
  - 2 Policies focused on enhancing farm viability need to be integrated to better support farming and ensure the multiple community benefits of having a strong sustainable agricultural sector—across national, state, regional and county levels, especially in the RUI [4]
  - 3 To counter the trend of farmland loss, a full suite of policy tools are recommended [6]
    - a **Increase** minimum lot sizes and **limit** non-agricultural uses,
    - b Designate Agricultural Zones to encompass all viable farmland,
    - c Protect farmland by securing development rights,
    - d Provide tax relief for farmland, and

e “Provide Economic and Regulatory Assistance to Farmers” [6]

b) Policy Recommendations for Metro County Governments [20]:

To promote Farm Viability in “metro” areas, nation-wide case study research provided the following policy recommendations

- 1 “Local governments should aim to prevent conflicts between farmers and non-farmer neighbors and to resolve those that arise in ways sympathetic to farmers’ interests
- 2 Local governments should apply zoning policies (e.g., large minimum-lot requirements ) that help to preserve an adequate land base for agriculture
- 3 State governments should enable, and local authorities operate, effective programs for purchasing development rights to farmland, thereby either adding to the land base that agricultural protection zoning supports or achieving what zoning fails to realize
- 4 Public and private agencies should encourage farm families to plan for the transfer of ownership and management to their children or other relatives
- 5 The same agencies should encourage the launching and sustaining of farm enterprises likely to be profitable on the urban edge
- 6 In geographic areas lacking sufficient farmers to sustain agri-service businesses, policy makers may need to encourage adaptations by both farm operators and suppliers
- 7 Policy makers should consider ways to provide for adequate numbers of farm workers ” [20].

Furthermore, results from the survey of farmers and other stakeholders in metro Counties revealed that

“almost a third felt that equal emphasis should be placed on farmland preservation and farm viability efforts in order to keep farming viable in their county, while approximately the same number felt the priority should be protecting agricultural land from development via growth management policies” [20]

“The unique characteristics of agriculturally important counties undergoing urbanization pressures pose challenges and opportunities to researchers and developers to recognize and employ the strategies that will help maintain a viable agricultural sector for urban-edge farming” [20]

c) Challenges Persist

- 1 Farmers identify the challenges of operating farms near urban markets—including uncertainties about the future, regulatory burdens, limited access to adequately sized farm land parcels, misunderstandings with nearby residents, and a lack of appreciation by the public [21]
- 2 The challenges of farming in urban regions reflect farmers’ perspectives documented in local Clark County and statewide reports [17, 22] However, we could not identify entities adequately funded to thoroughly pursue the solutions farmers continue to identify Farmer and stakeholder-recommended solutions have not been implemented

d) Solutions Exist

- i) Agrifood system networks can be effective in supporting the future of farming:
  - a There are more farms and more optimistic farmers in rural-urban interface (RUI) counties with food policy councils, economic support policies, and programs for farmers [23]
  - b Supportive networks, and good neighborly relationships with farmers, help to balance private landowner interests with land use policies that protect agricultural capacity [24]
  - c Having a strong network of support for farms is a critical element in defining resilience [25] and cultivating the viability of farming [23, 24]
- ii) Diversity contributes to food system resilience:
  - a Rural-Urban Interface (RUI) farmers are diverse in demographics, production systems, and market strategies [26]
  - b A diversity of farm types and scales are needed to promote agricultural resilience [27]
- iii) Innovative urban area agriculture is an important component of U.S. food systems:
  - a More than 75% of organic and direct market sales are generated in RUI counties [4]
  - b The USDA Census of Agriculture now tracks some aspects of farm innovation, but falls short in reflecting direct market sector attributes [28], which confounds the allocation of resources to support emerging farming models

**D) Research on farm resilience in Clark County—Preliminary Results:**

The *Agroecological<sup>1</sup> Assessment of Farming in the Rural-Urban Interface Building Resilient<sup>2</sup> Food Systems* project<sup>3</sup> involved the development and implementation of a Farm Resilience Assessment Tool (FRAT) using indicators of agronomic, social, economic, and environmental resilience. More sustainable and resilient food systems based on agroecology are increasingly recognized as means to address food insecurity [29-31]. At the farm level, an agroecosystem or “site of agricultural production,” includes the farms’ inputs, outputs, and complex interactions [32-21].<sup>3</sup>

Direct market farms use one or more direct market outlets in Clark County, such as Farmers Markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), U-pick, farm stands, and/or agri-tourism. Farms are diverse, in terms of their market outlets, management practices, length of time in farming, land tenure arrangements, operator age, and scale of operation (by gross sales and acreage).

---

<sup>1</sup> *Agroecology* applies ecological principles to sustainable agricultural practices, and is integrated with the social context for managing agroecosystems.

<sup>2</sup> *Resilience* in this project refers to the capacity of farms to grow food for local consumption over the long-term, whereby the farmer implements adaptive strategies to overcome challenges and complexity.

<sup>3</sup> The agroecosystem concept can be applied at a field, farm, landscape, regional, or food system scale.



One goal of conducting the *Assessment* with a diversity of farms is to illuminate ways in which current farming operations contribute to a resilient food system. Selected farmers interviewed demonstrate their commitment to the pursuit of sustainability through their practices, such as water conservation, soil enhancement, and using biologically-based pest controls. They all use practices that contribute to ecological diversity. Diverse cropping systems using biologically-driven practices are fairly common, among a wide array of agroecological practices. To improve farm viability, the results also confirmed that farmers pursue a diverse range of strategies to reduce risks. They variously pursue crop diversity, organic inputs, market diversity, using water-conserving irrigation methods, and have a strong commitment to farming.

Selected farms have moderately adequate access to land, water, and productive soil for current operations. When farmers considered expansion, they reported various constraints such as access to labor, land, water, and market viability. Not surprising, the farms within more urbanized areas experience more problems with neighbors. All the farmers identified the need for greater consumer awareness and public support.

Most farmers saw a need for greater farmer-to-farmer networking and access to advanced agroecological information. Agency expertise in agronomy, entomology, fungal disease, and advanced farm management, are noticeably lacking in Southwest Washington, especially compared to Oregon and other parts of Washington. Improved access to university research, extension centers' specialists, courses, and resources, such as those offered by the WSU Small Farms Program could be of benefit.

In addition to employing a combination of direct marketing strategies, many farmers in the study were interested in more opportunities to aggregate their products to serve markets such as restaurants or institutions. Many farms market in Portland, where venues are more abundant and/or considered more favorable. Some were already engaged in informal knowledge sharing and marketing cooperation with other farmers.

Research results suggest that the efforts of local organizations to strengthen farmland protection are on target, including the multi-stakeholder Clark County Food System Council and Friends of Clark County. Local efforts to promote marketing and consumer participation in Clark County include those of the Food System Council, Slow Foods SW Washington, existing Farmers' Markets, as well as "food hub" type initiatives and ideas for a year-round market outlet. Very active in Clark County, the Farm Bureau works to gain public support for the social and economic interests of farm and ranch families at the local, state and national levels.

#### **E) References and Endnotes**

- 1 Clark County Food System Council, *Policy Roadmap for Clark County's Food System Strategies for Change* 2012
- 2 Clark County Food System Council, *Promoting Agricultural Food Production in Clark County* 2013
- 3 Jackson-Smith, D.B. and E. Jensen, *Finding Farms: Comparing Indicators of Farming Dependence and Agricultural Importance in the United States*. Rural Sociology, 2009 74(1) p 37-55
- 4 Jackson-Smith, D.B. and J. Sharp, *Farming in the urban shadow: Supporting agriculture at the rural-urban interface*. Rural Realities, 2008 2(4) p 1-12

- 5 de Zeeuw, H , *Cities Farming for the Future - Multi-Stakeholder Policy Formulation and Action Planning on Urban Agriculture in Developing Countries* Acta Hort (ISHS), 2010(881) p 97-109
- 6 Canty, D , A Martinsons, and A Kumar, *Losing Ground Farmland Protection in the Puget Sound Region* 2012, American Farmland Trust
- 7 Patzek, L , S Rucker, and J Goldberger, *Produce Farm-to-Market Trends A Case Study of South Puget Sound*, WSU Extension, Editor 2015, Washington State University
- 8 Gilroy, A , *Exploring the Clark County Food System* 2008, a food system assessment sponsored by Steps to a Healthier Clark County, Community Choices, and Clark County Public Health, for the Clark County Food System Council
- 9 Ostrom, M , *What Does our Current Food System Look Like?*, in *Cultivating Regional Food Security* 2010 Center for Urban Horticulture, U W , Seattle
- 10 USDA, *2012 U S Census of Agriculture Washington State and County Data* 2014
- 11 Born, B and K Martin, *Western Washington Foodshed Study Evaluating the potential for Western Washington to meet its food needs based on locally produced foods* 2011, University of Washington
- 12 Williams-Derry, C , *Rural Sprawl in Metropolitan Portland A comparison of growth management in Oregon and Washington* 2012, Sightline Institute,
- 13 Globalwise Inc, *Analysis of the Agricultural Economic Trends and Conditions in Clark County, Washington* 2007
- 14 Berk Consulting, *Memo RE Rural Lands Study Draft Policy Options* 2012, To Clark County Planning
- 15 Kline, J D., et al , *How well has land-use planning worked under different governance regimes? A case study in the Portland, OR-Vancouver, WA metropolitan area, USA* Landscape and Urban Planning, 2014 131 p. 51-63
- 16 Washington Dept of Commerce and Cascade Land Conservancy, *Making Transfer of Development Rights Work in Your Community*, in *APA Washington 2010 Conference Resurgent Washington Implementing Smart and Healthy Growth* 2010
- 17 Office of Farmland Preservation, *Washington State Farmland Preservation Indicators* 2009, Washington State Conservation Commission,
- 18 American Farmland Trust and WSDA, *Future of Farming Project Working Paper and Statistics on Farmland in Washington* 2008, Washington\_State\_Department\_of\_Agriculture
- 19 American Farmland Trust *What's Happening to our Farmland?* National Resources Inventory report statistics, 2007
- 20 Oberholtzer, L , K Clancy, and J D Esseks, *The future of farming on the urban edge Insights from fifteen U S counties about farmland protection and farm viability* Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2010 1(2) p 49-75.
- 21 Hammond, B , R Green, and G Berardi, *Resilience in agriculture Small and medium-sized farms in northwest Washington State* Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, 2013. 37(3) p 316-339
- 22 Ag Preservation Committee, *Clark County Ag Preservation Strategies Report* 2009
- 23 Sharp, J , D Jackson-Smith, and L Smith, *Agricultural Economic Development at the Rural-Urban Interface Community Organization, Policy, and Agricultural Change* Jrn of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2011 1(4) p 1-26

24. Libby, L W and J S Sharp, *Land-Use Compatibility, Change, and Policy at the Rural-Urban Fringe Insights from Social Capital* Am J Agricultural Economics American Journal of Agricultural Economics, 2003 85(5) p 1194-1200
- 25 Milestad, R and I Darnhofer, *Building Farm Resilience The Prospects and Challenges of Organic Farming* Journal of Sustainable Agriculture, 2003 22(3) p 81-97
- 26 Inwood, S , et al , *Farm Adaptation at the Rural-Urban Interface* Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2013 p. 1-18
- 27 Berardi, G , R Green, and B Hammond *Stability, sustainability, and catastrophe Applying resilience thinking to US agriculture* Human Ecology Review, 2011. 18, 115-125
- 28 Hunt, A and G Matteson, *More Than Counting Beans Adapting USDA Data Collection Practices To Track Marketing Channel Diversification* JAFSCD Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2012 2(4) p 101-117
- 29 De Schutter, O , *The transformative potential of the right to food* 2014, United Nations
- 30 De Schutter, O , *Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food*, in *Human Rights Council*, U. Nations, Editor 2010
31. IAASTD, *International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development Global Report* 2009
- 32 Gliessman, S R , *Agroecology the ecology of sustainable food systems* 3rd ed 2014 CRC

---

<sup>i</sup> This research is primarily being conducted by Jude Wait, a Ph D candidate in Environmental and Natural Resource Management Along with 16 years' experience in community-based non-profit development, she holds a Masters in Management, graduate certificates in Sustainability Leadership and Sustainable Agriculture, and has been immersed in agrifood system research since 2008

<sup>ii</sup> Clark County's AI classification is based on having sales/acre is "in the top quartile" for "sales per acre of farmland over \$366," and "sales per acre of cropland" over \$638, as well as by "total sales" between \$36 1 and \$72 5 million

<sup>iii</sup> RUI counties are identified by their Urban Influence Code or high population growth rate, designated by the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS); <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/>

<sup>iv</sup> The Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF) See RUAF Foundation <http://www.ruaf.org/node/512>

<sup>v</sup> USDA. Economic Research Service (ERS) <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/atlas-of-rural-and-small-town-america/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#UvPfjrS9Lvc>

<sup>vi</sup> U S Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2012 Census of Agriculture, [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/Washington/](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Washington/)

<sup>vii</sup> 52 acres of farmland is now residential development ([www.columbian.com/news/2014/jul/06/erickson-farms-holds-memories-residents-developers/](http://www.columbian.com/news/2014/jul/06/erickson-farms-holds-memories-residents-developers/))

<sup>viii</sup> Continued road expansion eliminates actively farmed land in the City of Vancouver [http://www.oregonlive.com/clark-county/index.ssf/2011/12/last\\_full-scale\\_farm\\_in\\_vancou.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/clark-county/index.ssf/2011/12/last_full-scale_farm_in_vancou.html)

<sup>ix</sup> Bruce Prenguber, personal communication, October, 2014

<sup>x</sup> Grant from WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources to J Wait and M Ostrom (PI)