

January 26, 2007

To Whom It May Concern at Service Canada:

Re: Farmers' Markets Nova Scotia Cooperative Ltd. Labour Market Study

I am writing on behalf of the Ecology Action Centre's Food Action Committee in Halifax, Nova Scotia to voice our support for the application put in by Farmers' Markets Nova Scotia Cooperative Ltd. to the Labour Market Employment Development, part of your Labour Market Partnership (LMP) program. This proposal speaks to the need for effective on-going training in Nova Scotian towns and farming communities to tackle the lack of local supply issue currently affecting the food industry across this province. The purpose of the Farmers' Market's proposed study is to gather information on which to base a strategy to identify, engage, and bring new producers to the Direct Farm Marketing scene and particularly to the 10 farmers' markets in the province-wide Cooperative.

The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) has been acting as a voice for Nova Scotia's environment for over 35 years and the Food Action Committee is one of the EAC's seven action committees. The goal of the Food Action Committee (FAC) is to increase individual and collective food access and self-reliance in Nova Scotia. Specifically FAC aims to:

- 1) promote the social, economic, and environmental benefits of locally-produced food; and
- 2) promote socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable ways of growing, processing, and distributing food.

FAC supports the Farmers' Markets Nova Scotia Cooperative Ltd. Labour Market Study proposal because we agree there is a serious need for more local small-scale food producers in our province. In general, food travels great distances from farm to fork. In Canada our meal ingredients travel an average of 2000km to reach our plates¹. Transporting food such long distances requires burning large amounts of fossil fuel, resulting in increased emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. By eating food grown closer to home, we can significantly reduce the environmental impact of transporting food.

Purchasing locally grown, seasonal foods has economic benefits too. Research conducted by Oxfam America has found for every dollar spent within the local food

¹ Ten Days for Global Justice. What's All the Hot Air About? <http://www.web.net/~tendays/hotair>.

system, three dollars goes back into the local economy². Buying directly from producers (via farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture, road side stands, etc.) means the farmer receives a greater share, if not all, of the profit, instead of having monies diverted to packaging, transportation, and other costs. This helps provide the farmers a liveable income³.

The Food Action Committee supports the Farmers' Markets Nova Scotia Cooperative's stated objectives and sincerely hopes Service Canada realizes the environmental and economic benefits of investing in such a study.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Green,
On behalf of the Ecology Action Centre's Food Action Committee.

For more information on our organization please visit:
www.ecologyaction.ca

² Oxfam America. 2002. Buy Local. Food and Farm Toolkit. Author: Boston, MA.

³ McCullum C, Desjardins E, Kraak V, Ladipo P, Costello H. 2005. Evidence-based strategies to build community food security. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 105(2):278-83