

Thought for Food

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Food Action Coalition: Local Foodies Connecting

Gail Southall

The Creston Valley Food Action Coalition is a group of people – farmers, community service organization reps, educators, students, working stiffs, and retirees – connected by a common goal: to better feed our community using local resources. The Coalition is a recently-formed non-profit society, made up of about 25 people that meet monthly to discuss all things food. The Coalition's motto, Let's Grow, Let's Eat, Let's Share, stems from the shared belief that growing our own food, supporting our local farmers, and sharing good food with those around us, can only benefit our community: economically, physically, environmentally, and culturally.

The Food Action Coalition (FAC) is involved in a number of initiatives in support of its goals:

- ***Farm Fresh Guide***. There's a little green pamphlet that's been popping up all over town that lists about 50 places you can find locally-grown products. Listing everything from bedding plants to wine, the Farm Fresh Guide is a terrific resource for those interested in sourcing local foods and complementary products. Get yours at the library, book stores, real estate offices or Saturday Market. Searchable and printable Guides are available on the Coalition's web site: www.crestonfarmfresh.ca. We're always looking for more producers to add to our list.
- ***Eat Locally Grown signs***. To identify and draw attention to farm fresh venues, this colourful sign (see advertisement on page xx) announces where you can buy locally-grown. Look for these signs throughout the Creston Valley.
- ***Harvest Share***. The pure abundance of fruits and vegetables grown in our area means that sometimes there are fruit trees that don't get picked, and vegetables that don't get eaten (zucchini, anyone?). At the same time, there are folks in our community who, for various reasons, are not getting enough fresh, good food to eat. The FAC is working to see wholesome food that might otherwise go to waste, get into the hands of those that need it. We're examining models from other communities and hope to have a system developed in the near future. In the meantime, if you have extra fruits or vegetables, please pick them and donate them to the Food Bank, or, if you are unable to pick, call the FAC and we'll try to help.
- ***Free Workshops***. To help our community regain a sense of connection to the seasons and to the life-giving earth, the FAC is partnering with the Creston & District Public Library to deliver a series of free workshops on food preservation (canning, dehydrating, root cellar techniques, etc.) and preparation (simple cheese making, sprouting, etc.) to be offered over the next several months.
- ***Public Education***. The FAC also hopes to rekindle community excitement about local food through its web site, public presentations, elementary school programs, healthy eating seminars, community supported agriculture and co-operative initiatives, and informing public policy.

The Creston Valley Food Action Coalition meets monthly from September through June at the Creston public library. Membership is free. For more information please contact Gail Southall at 250-254-0254 or email cvfoodaction@gmail.com