

British Columbia
Organic Grower
 JOURNAL FOR THE CERTIFIED ORGANIC ASSOCIATIONS OF BC



Ask an Expert: BC Seed Security

Published on January 1, 2019 — in 2019/Ask an Expert/Crop Production/Current Issue/Grow Organic/Seeds/Winter 2019

Scaling Up Organic Vegetable Seed Production in BC

Emma Holmes, P.Ag

The organic seed sector will be getting a boost through a comprehensive project that includes seed production, business, and market supports.

FarmFolk CityFolk, which has been working to cultivate local, sustainable food systems since 1993, will be leading the project with funding provided from the Governments of Canada and B.C. through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership. The five year, \$3 billion Canadian Agricultural Partnership launched on April 1, 2018, and includes \$2 billion in cost-shared strategic

initiatives delivered by the provinces and territories, plus \$1 billion for federal programs and services.

FarmFolk CityFolk will specifically be working on:

- Developing a mobile seed processing unit to help small and mid-scale seed farmers efficiently and affordably process seed
- Expanding seed production skills training in the Lower Mainland, Okanagan, Kootenays and North through focused in-person training and webinars
- Supporting new entrants and small seed businesses with “Seed Enterprise Budgets” to help farmers plan and prepare for expenses, revenues and inventory management
- Supporting Seedy Saturday events around the province by developing shared event planning resources

This project builds off of FarmFolk CityFolk’s previous work with the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, as well as Dan Jason’s Seed Resiliency report commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture this past winter. Jason’s report included an inventory of seed assets in the province as well as recommendations for increasing seed resiliency in BC.



BEET SEEDS. CREDIT: CHRIS THOREAU

British Columbia has the greatest diversity of crops and growing conditions of any province or territory in Canada. This provides a great opportunity to work with a wide range of ecosystems to create regionally tested and locally adapted seeds that support our local foodsheds in uncertain climates and that can also thrive in diverse climates around the world.

Seed production provides BC organic farmers with an opportunity to diversify their farm production and increase revenue. The market for certified organic seed is expected to continue to grow in the coming decades as the consumer demand for organic products increases and certifiers are adopting stricter enforcement around purchasing certified organic seed when available.

FarmFolk CityFolk will be collaborating with other organizations in BC focused on seed, such as the UBC Farm Seed Hub, KPU’s new lab for seed testing and cleaning (a major new asset for the province), and the BC Eco Seed Co-op. The strengths of these organizations, combined with the incredible passion and energy of local seed savers, farmers, and growers, will go a long way in supporting the development B.C.’s organic seed sector, the base of resilient communities and thriving food systems.

bcseeds.org

Emma Holmes has a BSc in Sustainable Agriculture and an MSc in Soil Science, both from UBC. She farmed on Orcas Island and Salt Spring Island and is now the Organics Industry Specialist at the BC Ministry of Agriculture. She can be reached at: Emma.Holmes@gov.bc.ca

Feature image: Examining carrots as part of the BC Seed Trials. Credit: Chris Thoreau

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE

PINTEREST

TAGS:

AGROECOLOGY

ASK AN EXPERT

BIODIVERSITY

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

SEEDS

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN



**Organic Stories:
UBC Farm,**



**California
Programs Show**



**Local Seeds for
Local Food**