



SOLE FOOD
STREET FARMS

2016 Annual Report

MISSION STATEMENT

“Our mission is to empower individuals with limited resources by providing jobs, agricultural training, and inclusion in a supportive community of farmers and food lovers”

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- Entire staff attended 2-day team building and visioning retreat at Foxglove Farm on Salt Spring Island
- Completed a rebuild of Vernon St. farm to replace wood containers with newly locally manufactured, Sole Food branded plastic containers
- Successfully transitioned in our new Farm Operations Director - with thanks and gratitude to our outgoing ops director
- Successful completion of canning program year-2. Trained 4 staff members, canned 420 lbs of produce into 4 different value-added products
- All staff attended monthly professional development sessions to improve life and agricultural skills
- Retained 60% of staff from previous years
- All staff participated in the Recipes for Success Program, an employment support program in collaboration with Potluck Café.
- Provided drivers training to staff members
- Harvested and marketed our second commercial crops of, pears, apples, figs, plums, quince, and persimmons from our urban orchard to farmer’s markets and restaurants.
- Continued to grow a partnership with Roasters Hot Sauce, a local artisan hot sauce producer, providing habaneros and trialling production of super-hot peppers for their signature sauces.
- Release of a feature length documentary titled, A New Economy that features Sole Food Farms.
- Sole Food director/co-founder, Michael Ableman



Image capture from “A New Economy”

released his new book, Street Farm, which tells his story of the founding and growth of Sole Food Street Farms.

- Launched an endowment campaign to secure long term financing for Sole Food.

2016: A great year for telling our story

In 2016 Sole Food Street farms was featured in two major media releases that have the potential to bring the Street Farm story to a wider audience than ever before

STREET FARM ON THE BIG SCREEN

The film, *A New Economy*, asks the question: "What if working together for the good of all was the most common business model," and features seven interwoven stories of businesses from around the globe that are attempting to answer that question.

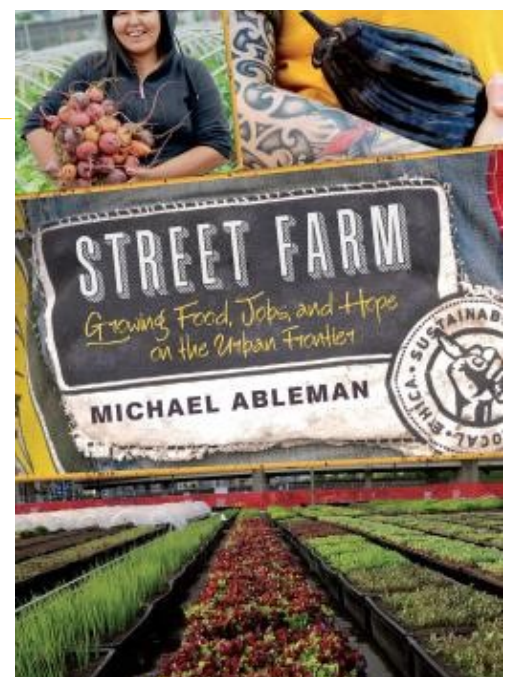
Sole Food Street Farms' staff and management participated in the production of this film and several of our long-term employees from the DTES were interviewed, offering their take on what Sole Food Farms does in an emotionally charged and candid, but also often funny and heartwarming way. The film is remarkable and highlights much of the very good work that is being done to model a new way of doing business. We are proud of our contribution to the film and are grateful to the filmmakers for their support.



SOLE FOOD IN BOOKSTORES

Sole Food co-founder and director, Michael Ableman's new book was released in 2016: *Street Farm: Growing Food, Jobs and Hope on the Urban Frontier*, is an inspirational account of residents in the notorious Low Track in Vancouver, British Columbia—one of the worst urban slums in North America—who joined together to create an urban farm as a means of addressing the chronic problems in their neighborhood. It is a story of recovery, of land and food, of people, and of the power of farming and nourishing others as a way to heal our world and ourselves.

Thanks to a generous gift from the SpencerCreo Foundation, all proceeds from the Vancouver edition of this book will go directly to support Cultivate Canada and Sole Food Street Farms



8 Years of Impact

Sole Food Street Farms provides meaningful employment to people who are facing barriers in their life. We strive to create an environment that meets people where they are at, where they can be successful, and where they can gain confidence to grow forward. Below are some of the social metrics we've been tracking:

SOCIAL IMPACT

Total people employed from DTES: >75

Total wages / Salaries Paid: \$1,525,669

DTES & local economic impact: \$610,267

Estimated savings to local Food bank: \$21,600

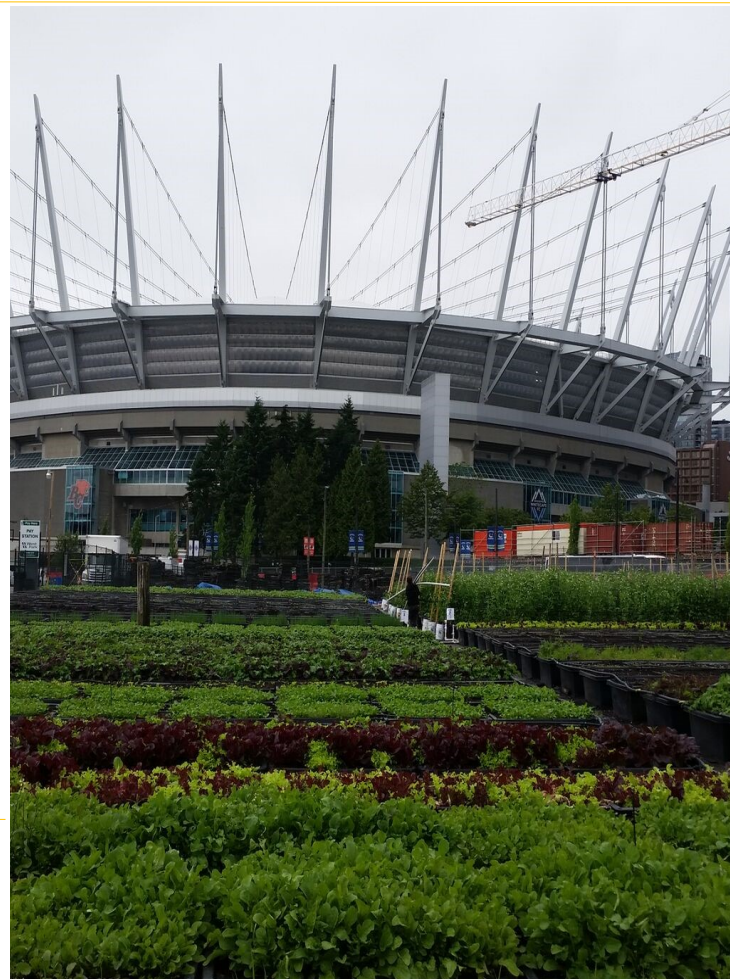
Total Sales Revenue: \$1,217,279

Carbon Capture from Orchard: 1,250 KG annually

Savings to healthcare, legal and social assistance system for every dollar paid to Sole Food employees: \$1.70 (Queens University Study, 2013)

Total estimated savings to public assistance programs: \$1,056,000

*metrics employed were documented by Queens University and Queen's School of Business in their 2013 Project Report, 'Demonstrating Value.'



& Life skills building AGRICULTURAL TRAINING

Throughout the season staff are offered opportunities to gain new skills that support their growth. This year we offered workshops in:

- farmers market sales
- canning basics
- fruit tree pruning
- pruning and budding
- soil sciences (provided by UBC's School of Land and Food Systems)
- cultivating compassion
- staff led home cooking workshops
- Naloxone Training

Staff & Community Partnerships

Events & Fundraising

We work alongside many amazing people, local businesses and organizations that share our goal of improving the lives of DTES residents. Here are just a few examples from this past year:

We continued our partnership with **chef Karen McAthy of Blue Heron Creamery** for the second year of our Canning Pilot Program. We also welcomed a new partnership with the **Greater Vancouver Food Bank** who provided use their community kitchen for our canning sessions. Their space was a welcome addition to the program that was well equipped, flexible and affordable, and a great atmosphere for our staff. We look forward to working with them again in the future.

The SpencerCreo Foundation provided the first of a series of Naloxone trainings to Sole Food staff and management to help combat the epidemic of fentanyl overdoses that is centered on the DTES. The Foundation also provides ongoing support services to our staff.

In December, **Servants** provided a space for our staff, management and guests to enjoy an outstanding home cooked meal by **Josh Blumenthal of Elementa** for our Christmas Social. Thank you to Andrea, Josh and the folks at Servants for making this event happen!

In November, the **Real Estate Foundation of BC** provided space for Sole Food to host a silent auction at it's annual Fall Gala. Many thanks to the organizers for thinking of us, and to the many local businesses that donated items to the auction.

We gratefully acknowledge the continued support of all the dedicated chefs who choose our product, and by extension, our mission. While we have many returning restaurant supporters this year we welcomed **Savio Volpe, Nightingale, Zero Waste Market, Kissa Tanto, and Crowbar**. Special recognition goes out to **Homer Street Cafe and Bar**, and their sister restaurant **Tableau Bistro**, who continued to be our strongest supporters. Together they spent over \$18,000 dollars purchasing Sole Food products in addition to donating their time and resources for our fall fundraiser.

Our Fall "Friendraiser", "An Evening in the Orchard," held on October 6th brought almost 100 people under a tent in our orchard at Main & Terminal to enjoy a family-style meal cooked by chefs from **Homer St. Cafe, Burdock & Co., Bishops, Savio Volpe, The Farmer's Apprentice, and Hawksworth Restaurant**. Despite heavy rainfall, the event, emceed by Fred Lee @fredabouttown, was a success, raising more than \$16,000 in ticket sales and donations while introducing our project to a new audience of potential supporters. Thanks also to event sponsors, **JoieFarm Wines, Saltspring Coffee, Faculty Brewing, and A&B Partytime Rentals**.

We were thrilled to once again attend the **Vancouver Farmer's Market 2016 RIPE** dinner. Paired with chef Karen McAthy. This is our 4th season participating in the event and donating produce to support their fundraising efforts. It is always a season highlight!

Moksha Yoga raised \$358 during through their weekly Community Karma class this August. All proceeds donated by these yogis went to Sole Food. We were also happy to donate some of our summer produce bounty to enjoy at their end-of-month Karma celebration.

Finally, big thanks go out to **Trevor Meier and the producers of, "A New Economy,"** for not only did they host Sole Food Staff at the sold- out Vancouver premier, they graciously donated the proceeds from ticket sales to Sold Food. It is a wonderful film that we are proud to be a part of.



Sales & Revenues

*in 2016 43% of Sole Food's revenues were from farm activities, the remaining 57% was received through a service agreement with **Cultivate Canada** for the agricultural training and employment of Downtown East Side residents.*

2016 SALES

Farm production dipped in 2016 from the previous year due to poor weather conditions in the region that affected the yield of some of our key signature crops. We were not alone in this as many farms have reported similar weather related reductions. Additional fundraising was required to compensate. This situation highlighted the need for Sole Food to continue its ongoing work to build a resilient business model.

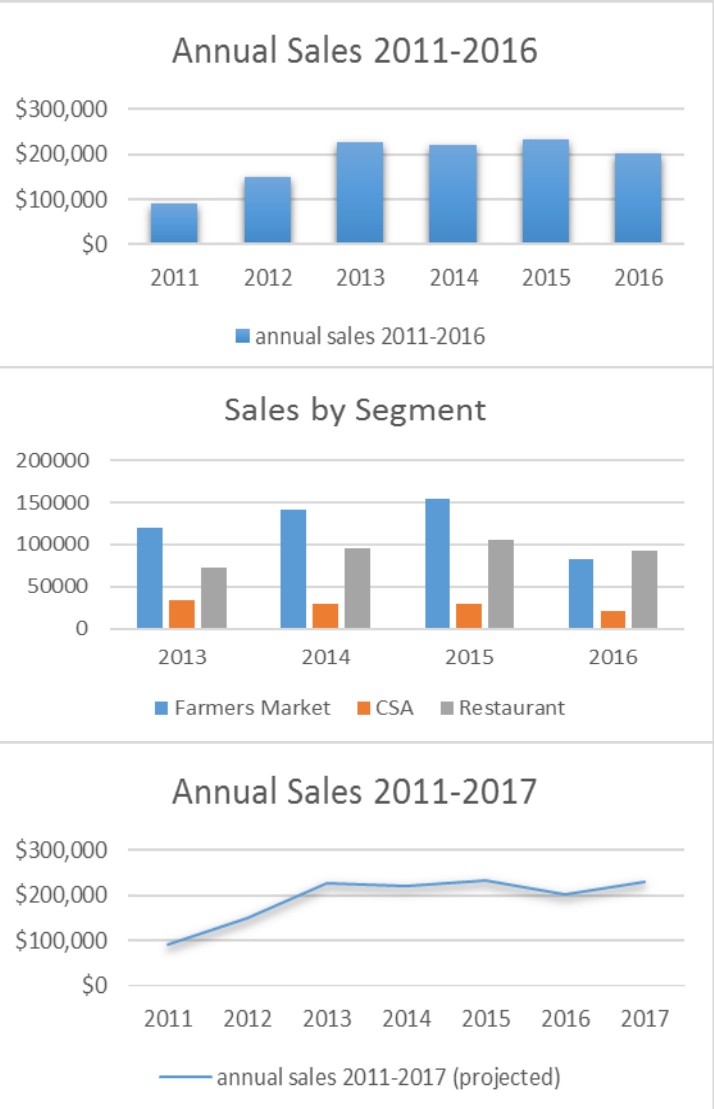
Farm revenue primarily consists of the sale of produce to consumers at farmer's markets and through a Community Supported Agriculture program, along with direct marketing to Vancouver area restaurants and other food businesses. Additionally, revenue is earned by providing tours to the public along with school and university groups.

2017 SALES PROJECTIONS

2017 farm sales are conservatively estimated at \$230,000. This returns us to 2015 sales levels after a difficult crop year in 2016.

Improved capacity at Vernon St. and an expected rebuild of the Hasting St. farm should positively impact production and boost sales above current projections.

Also, proposed changes to our CSA program will streamline operations, resulting in greater capacity to service our restaurant accounts, a market segment that has shown to have excellent potential for growth.



However, the upcoming move of the Pacific farm near the end of November, 2017 is likely to have a softening effect on our end of year sales, rounding off the year at the projected levels.

Street Farm: Stories of Success

“We wanted the broader community to see that there was something other than the hardness of pavement...We wanted the world to know that people from this neighbourhood, those who were viewed as low-life losers could create something beautiful and productive.” - excerpt from ‘Street Farm’

ALAIN GUY - SITE SUPERVISOR

“I've been with Sole Food since the beginning. Was on disability for over 10 years and thanks to Sole Food I've been off disability for over a year and of this coming season I will be in management. Which I hope will help me facilitate my vision: Humans first profits second!”



MIKE DEVINE - SITE SECURITY

“This is my second season at Sole Food Farms where I work security and do some maintenance and farm work. Working here has given meaning to my life and improved my self esteem and I get a lot of satisfaction knowing I am part of a group that benefits others by providing healthy organic food as opposed to the genetically modified pesticide riddled food found in many large supermarkets.

Sole food has provided a positive environment, friendly coworkers and a great learning experience. Thank You!!!



Cultivate Canada

Sole Food Street Farms is wholly owned by Cultivate Canada, which oversees and supports the operations and activities of the social enterprise.

Cultivate Canada is a registered charity established to demonstrate and interpret the vital connections between farming, land stewardship, and community well-being; to model the economic and social possibilities for small and medium-scale urban and rural agricultural and forestry projects, to address disparities in access to healthy food and the knowledge to produce it. To nurture the human spirit through public programs, classes, and events.

Board of Directors:

Michael Ableman

John Bishop

Katie Blake

Mickey McLeod

Russell Precious

Communications and donations can be sent to:

Cultivate Canada

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Please visit our website for more information on where to purchase Sole Food Street Farm products.

Thank you to our Donors!

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