



## Second Annual Quarterly Newsletter

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### Eat Local Grey Bruce Co-operative

In 2015, the Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology has worked with four local farms on a business plan for a food distribution alliance, supported by a Growing Forward II grant. After successful completion, we performed a Test Run where we set up a basic online store, reached out to our community of farmers and consumers, and sold \$23,000 worth of food by 25 producers to 220 customers. In total, 630 people signed up. Now, Eat Local Grey Bruce is incorporated and getting ready to start regular deliveries in May 2016.

In this second edition of our "quarterly" newsletter, we highlight some of the activities of 2015 and also share some of our ideas for 2016. Want to learn more or get involved? Don't hesitate to contact us about suitable projects, as non-members work with us on a project before deciding to join.

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### About us

by KRISTINE HAMMEL

The Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology is a group of farmer researchers working on policies and on-farm production research to benefit ecological farmers. Our members have academic degrees and professional experience, but we are farmers first! Our members rely on farming as a significant share of our annual income. With our combination of practice and theory, we see ourselves as a bridge between policy, research and practice. And we provide a rooted alternative to corporate consultants. As a group with diverse professional backgrounds, we have a wide range of knowledge, experience and skill sets that

make us uniquely suited to understanding the strengths, needs and challenges of diversified farms. Our goal is to further the success of such farmers through our work with the public sector (policies, best practices, systems analysis) and all participants in the food system (production, distribution, advocacy, education).

### Projects

In 2015, we finalized the C.R.A.F.T. International project and took on one major projects, a farmer-driven food distribution alliance for the counties of Grey and Bruce. Download our documents at <http://www.gbcae.com/publications.html>! Here we only provide summaries!



## Best Practices for C.R.A.F.T. farm internship groups

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

As a member of the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (C.R.A.F.T.) in Southwest Ontario, Thorsten Arnold was contracted to assess best practices for running C.R.A.F.T. groups in North America. Based on interviews with over 20 CRAFT group coordinators and in-depth discussions during two C.R.A.F.T. meetings, best practices and lessons were derived. There are no simple answers, but include leadership, team spirit, and cautious support by non-profits that respect the farmer-led dynamics without taking over. Several tools were collected that lower the entry barrier. We regret that funding for a sustained international group could not be sustained.

### What is Agroecology?

Agroecology applies ecological principles – nutrient cycling, population regulation, energy flows and a dynamic equilibrium – to farming systems, in order to make the best use of nature’s productive ability without damaging these resources. As a practice, agroecology explores ecological principles for soil fertility and pest management. As a science, agroecology takes a whole-systems perspective to food, feed, and fiber production that balances environmental soundness, social equity, and economic viability among all sectors of the public, including international and intergenerational peoples. As a movement of farmers, agroecology connects farmers with farmers for learning and knowledge exchange, farmers and consumers for a new alliance of food.

## Business plan for a distribution alliance

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

Food distribution remains the missing link in a local food system. Three farmers from diverse backgrounds and one processor came together and contracted Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology through a Growing Forward II grant. Several distribution models were discussed: wholesale, direct-to-consumers, specialized or full plate models. Finally, we agreed that a direct-to-consumer model is best suited to meet the needs of

direct marketers. We also agreed that only a farmer-led co-operative ownership can provide a secure marketing venue that direct marketers can rely on in a way that fosters investment and growth of their business. In a survey, consumers clearly favored a full-plate distribution model that is convenient and provides high quality. For such a model, the business plan assessed three different scales, and identified a break-even point of approx. \$ 1 Million revenue per year, conveyor-type box assembly, internet-based shopping, and home delivery wherever feasible.

<http://gbcae.com/YourLocalFoodGrocer.html>).



## Test Run for a distribution alliance

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

Once the business plan was finalized, our team suddenly faced the simple question: Can we trust our survey answers and interviews? Will customers actually support us? Will they like our product quality? – In order to build confidence into our analysis and plan, I myself took the initiative and volunteered to host a one-time test sales event on our premises (my wife Kristine still loves me for that ;-). We set up an online store (LocalFoodMarket-Place supported us outstandingly), convinced the local graphic designer Simon Farla, asked farmers to post their products, and then spread the word. The result were 630 signed up customers, orders worth \$23,000, and a big mess on our farm during the delivery day. Kristine Hamel from Persephone Market Garden outstandingly orchestrated packing with improvised infrastructure, and numerous helpers stayed to give us a hand. One afternoon, our premises filled up with chest freezers, boxes, dry ice, and lots of food everywhere. 15 pickup trucks and vans turned the quiet place into a parking lot... The next evening it was all gone. Well, the Te Velde’s still had to deliver a few boxes to Meaford; Rob Campbell was misled by my routing and needed a tow truck. And



several cabbages and a handful of brussel sprouts did not make it where they were supposed to be. Overall, we estimated packing errors at less than 1%!

The outcome: customer feedback was overwhelming, and farmers actually felt like a team. Online, customers voted for a name: **Eat Local Grey Bruce**. One week later, farmers have met, elected directors, appointed board members, and were ready to incorporate. Mark-up covered all costs for the one-time set-up (except for labor, of course).

With many lessons learned, I would not recommend anyone to do this again. It was a bit much and required all of my assets (including a clear vision, leadership, GIS and advanced EXCEL skills, website hacking, media liaison, strong support and advisory networks including my family, and luck). Still, I am convinced that the Test Run was a fantastic act of team building, and I believe a day of working together moves more in our community than so many meetings and paper exercises. Having gone through all details once, I am prepared to offer such an event as a consultant job elsewhere ... It is just easier that way.

## Reports on some 2015 workshops

### Agroecological Preparations series with Chuck Mitchell

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

Chuck Mitchell, an organic inspector with decades of extension background, offered a series of three workshops on indigenous microorganisms, complex plant ferments, and mineral preparations. The workshops were hosted at three different market gardens in Grey and Bruce and attended by 10-20 participants each. The first workshop mixed microorganisms from local sources (old-growth forest, native pasture, ant hills, etc) in order to create a highly diverse mix of lactic acid fermenters, forest fungi, yeasts, and whatever is out there. In the second workshop, we learned a simple method to ferment common plants like camphor, stinging nettle, and horse tail (those indigenous microorganisms came handy!). The third one was about the mineral toolkit - our hardest weapons in the arsenal

Participants were aware that these measures are no substitute for crop planning and rotation, but if things go wrong it is handy to have a fallback.

### Agroecological Pest Management with Fulvio Gioanetto

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

In August 2015, Dr. Fulvio Gioanetto who led a similar workshop in 2014 presented his approaches to the Bruce Huron Mennonites, and most of the audience sold produce through their auction. Workshop participants learned how naturally occurring plants on the farm can be used as bio-indicators of soil fertility and soil health, how to attract more beneficials, as well as how weeds and native plants can be used to make organic pesticides and grow healthier crops.

The knowledge-based, self-reliant methods that Fulvio promotes were already taken up by one farmer, David Martin who hosted the workshop. After the farm tour where participants collected weeds, an audience member asked "So ... does it actually work"? David looked at him and responded "Did you see any pests"? However, the discussions also made apparent that advanced methods (use of pollen as plant hormones, home-growing biopesticides) are all possible for a local farmer, but together exceed the capacity of what a single farm can learn effectively. New farmer collaboration networks are needed to take on such task. I personally hope that the Bruce Huron Mennonite community will take this challenge on!

### Agroecology 101, Grey Bruce Farmers Week

by KRISTINE HAMMEL

Kristine gave a half hour talk about agroecology at Ecological Day this past January. The presentation described agroecology as a science, practice and social movement, with examples from Ontario and abroad. The presentation sought to highlight what we can learn from agroecology and introduced the GBCEAE.

In the afternoon, Kristine participated in the panel on tools, describing her favourite tools for small-scale vegetable production. Paul de Jong provided his experience with field crops and Ken Laing described his horse-powered vegetable production tools, including the newest developments to support his increased use of cover crops.



## Intercropping at Guelph Organic Conference

by KRISTINE HAMMEL

At the end of January, Kristine gave a three hour workshop on intercropping in the the market garden at the Guelph Organic Conference. The room was packed and participants were eager! The workshop provided background on different types of intercropping, mechanisms of interactions amongst crops, impacts, challenges and opportunities, her experience at Persephone Market Garden, a intercrop planning process, crop plans and more. Over 120 participants attended in a crowded but concentrated room.

## Reading the Landscape at Guelph Organic Conference

by IVAN CHAN

Ivan gave a workshop on reading the landscape to a packed room of 80 at the Guelph Organic Conference. Using online data, environmental observations, and human usage patterns gathered from his farm, he illustrated how to better make sense of and prioritize landscape observations to make ecologically sound and enduring choices.

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## Report on international organic agriculture movements: Myanmar, Republic of Georgia, Cuba, Nicaragua

by CHUCK MITCHELL

Small farmers world wide are learning organic practices for a variety of reasons. Chuck discussed his work and the organizations promoting organic in various countries. When comparing soil degradation patterns with the rural exodus and the origins of refugees at a global scale, he summarized "Soil is more than just a production factor. Its degradation impacts global societal well-being and human security."

## Agroecology and Co-operatives

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

At the Local Organic Food Co-operative network Thorsten Arnold provided an overview about agroecology and co-operatives, together with Joan Brady (NFU-O, LOFC). We presented production concepts, a agroecological food system perspective, an agroecological perspective on IT infrastructure for food systems (my favorite topic!), and also applied agroecological holistic management principles and problem solving principles to the co-operative framework. Indeed, there are fundamental similarities to running an enterprise collectively and learning about agriculture collaboratively.

## Hire us to deliver food-related workshops!

by BRENDA HSUEH

Take advantage of the wide knowledge base of the team at GBCE! Our members and associates can lead workshops on a variety of topics to do with Food Systems and Agroecology; Farm Management; Market and Home Gardening; Ecology, the environment and food; and Food Preparation. You can see a detailed list at: <http://www.gbcae.com/workshops.html> (Download full list) )

If the topic you're interested in is not listed, ask us at [info@gbcae.com](mailto:info@gbcae.com) or via telephone!



### Finally some useful dietary guidelines!

Brazil's Ministry of Health and the Center for Epidemiological Research in Nutrition and Health of the University of São Paulo recently formulated ten simple guidelines to a healthy diet:

1. Make natural or minimally processed foods the basis of your diet
2. Use oils, fats, salt, and sugar in small amounts when seasoning and cooking natural or minimally processed foods and to create culinary preparations
3. Limit consumption of processed foods
4. Avoid consumption of ultra-processed foods
5. Eat regularly and carefully in appropriate environments and, whenever possible, in company
6. Shop in places that offer a variety of natural or minimally processed foods
7. Develop, exercise and share cooking skills
8. Plan your time to make food and eating important in your life
9. Out of home, prefer places that serve freshly made meals
10. Be wary of food advertising and marketing

Source: Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population 2014 <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/regions/brazil/en/>

### Interesting TidBits

#### Organic Agriculture 3.0 - Year two

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

Last year, European organic farmer associations declared the current approach to Organic Agriculture as a failure. Even with sustained slow growth, it will remain a niche for the next decades to come that continues to serve a few enlightened customers but, at large, has hardly any impact on the world's landscapes. Furthermore, European farmers increasingly fall back into biofuel production – monocultures without any food standards to soil and pesticide application. And the growing sales numbers in evermore stores are filled with organic imports from huge industrial farms that local farmers struggle to compete with. Farmer associations from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria have come together to call for a massive shift in priorities in order to achieve the goals of the organic movement: sustainable landscapes and healthy food. A position paper by Europe's largest organic associations, representing more than 100,000 organic farmers worldwide, can be accessed as translation at our website and was summarized in last year's newsletter (download). What has happened since?

First, the failure of Organic 2.0 and the need for Organic 3.0 was taken up widely. Organic 3.0 remains a cross-sectional theme at Biofach, the world's largest organic gathering. Oekologie & Landbau, Germany's leading organic policy magazine, is dedicating a regular section to it. IFOAM, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, has posted a discussion paper (<http://www.ifoam.bio/>). IFOAM first admits that current organic systems struggle to address issues like fair pricing, new farming technologies, and the important role of smallholder, non-certified farmers. Then, it calls for six principles of Organic 3.0: (1) a culture of innovation, (2) continuous improvement towards best practice, (3) diverse ways to ensure transparent integrity, (4) inclusive of wider sustainability interests, (5) holistic empowerment from farm to final consumer, (6) true value and fair pricing. In Canada, Andi Hammermeister, Director of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, calls for a roadmap to sustainability that addresses systemic issues, builds new approaches to organic research, engages communities and is built around principles of collaboration and continuous improvement. With the

need for change widely accepted, what's next?

Urs Niggli, director of FIBL (the world's largest organic research hub and policy think tank), believes that today's distinction between two types of agriculture (organic and conventional) is counterproductive. If the perceived split between the two types of agriculture and farmers becomes a barrier, he suggests that we need approaches that bring together the best practices to all types of agriculture. He calls for a new paradigm of the sector that guarantees the well-being of all stakeholders that guarantee the sustainability of the system and procedures that ensure the smart use of inputs. He points out that the focus should be on sustainability movements like small farmer movements.



## Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology



**Motto: Urban, Rural, Both –  
Community Supported Agriculture!**

In practice, the heart of Organic 3.0 will pulsate locally and in communities who work towards IFOAM's core principles of health, ecology, fairness and care; it is a path and not a place. Organic 3.0 is manifested in numerous local initiatives – private gardening communities, collaborative local organic food co-operatives, or at municipal level. The network *Citta de Bio* was born in Italy and today has over 200 member cities. Here, local governments commit to and implement organic principles: GMO-free farming, organic foods procured into public sector institutions, broad support of local organic and seasonal eating habits. For example, the city of Nuremberg now serves over 40% organic food in public kindergarten facilities, and 20% in schools. In such model regions, organic agriculture dominates agritourism, rural economic development and ultimately employment.

## Food Hubs - the mysterious road to salvation

by THORSTEN ARNOLD

During the last week of March, the Wallace Center hosted the 2016 National Good Food Network Conference on food hubs in Atlanta, Georgia. Several hundred attendants representing numerous food hubs shared their experience on "cracking the chicken-and-egg situation of bringing farm food to tables".

### What is a food hub?

The purpose of food hubs is aggregation and distribution of food. Food hubs can be distinguished in several ways: they can either buy from farmers or from large food terminals. Food hubs either aggregate for selling to wholesale buyers or directly to consumers, or they handle a single food category (specialized, e.g. meat, produce, fish, processed) or a variety of food categories (also "full plate", "full grocery basket"). Food hubs may own and utilize significant infrastructure ("mortar-and-bricks", delivery fleet) or connect only through brokering and quality control services while any other services are leased out ("virtual"). Food hubs may be owned by consumers, middlemen, or producers. Some food hubs specialize in organic goods or other features that distinguish their products from the mass market (e.g. grass-fed beef).

### Why do we need food hubs?

Today, farmers mostly sell into an anonymous global wholesale market or directly to consumers. In general, wholesale prices are between 10% and 45% of retail prices (NFU 2015) and expose farmers to global competition. Direct marketers achieve even better prices by distinguishing their products from store-bought food: consumers trust farmers and are willing to pay premium for a product perceived as having different qualities (freshness, taste, relationship, health and other impacts). But direct marketers spend enormous efforts on marketing, which keeps them from producing. Also, not every farmer is a talented marketer - but does (s)he need to be?

Food hubs offer a third path for marketing: they maintain a more direct connection between producers and buyers, aggregate products from multiple farmers in order to serve larger markets, and/or simply reduce marketing efforts of individual farms. Food hubs free farmer resources from marketing, which may then be used for other activities such as production growth, learning, community outreach, family time, or sleep.

### Operational models of food hubs and objectives

Operational models vary in their objectives:

*Wholesale aggregators* buy from multiple local farmers, establish product consistency and sell to wholesale buyers (retailers, other distributors, processors, food service providers). Aggregators generally support middle-scale farms and may compete with large corporate farms that standardize at production level. Consumer demands are considered indirectly through the buyers.

*Consumer distributors* buy wholesale at a terminal and sell to consumers. Objective is often shareholder profit, consumer convenience, and access to a distinguished product (e.g. "certified organic"). Other operational models support low-income consumers who lack access to affordable fresh food (e.g. "good food box"). Farmers and rural development are not immediate part of the objectives.

*Farm-to-table distributors* buy from farms and directly deliver to consumers. Farm-to-table enterprises often resonate both the interests of consumers and producers.

In practice, *hybrid models* are common. Wholesale aggregators may add a food box program due to higher margins, and consumer distributors may build ties with selected farmers out of marketing purposes, and farm-to-table distributors act as wholesale vendors and also supplement their choice as wholesale buyers.

### Food chain values and product distinction

Many food hubs strive to distinguish their products from the mainstream market through labels, claims or relationships. Objectives include maintaining a price premium, marketing, and true values. It is not always easy to assess what objectives are served with product distinction: all food hubs must balance value claims and profitability, but numerous examples exist where value claims were subverted to marketing purposes - even unintentionally.

Food hubs can derail the transmission of values through the food chain. Distributor-centered systems strive to maximize profits and market control, while risks are externalized. Producers bear the risk for weather and price fluctuations. Distributors protect themselves from liability against food-borne illness (pathogens, toxins) by demanding strong food safety requirements from producers, while long-term health risks (diet-related civilization diseases) are externalized to consumers. Producer-friendly systems commit to longer-term contracts that secure returns to investments, offer transparent and secure pricing, pay instantly, and establish risk sharing mechanisms. Consumer-centered systems promote product distinction (e.g. "certified organic") but have little regards for fair work conditions or farm financial sustainability.

In several central European countries, organic producers have jointly declared that the thriving organic sector fails to meet its environmental and economic promises, because organic distributors increasingly rely on imports from large global players and continue to displace local family farms. Such food chains continue to play off producers against con-



# Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology

men (IFOAM 2015). Centrist positions call for a shift from global organic supply chains towards locally integrated and short supply chains that transmit values and balance the interests of producers, consumers, and distributors and also shares risks fairly (FIBL 2015).

For assessing marketing claims and true values, good questions to ask include: Who owns the enterprise and what is owner's main objective? How is the risk of weather and price fluctuations shared along the food chain? How healthy is the food really? Does the food hub support long-term relationships with farmers that actually support their businesses? Does a food hub leverage a triple bottom line that takes into consideration consumers, distributors, farm owners, farm workers, and the environment? In a world of corporate spin and product claims, a general rule is: the shorter a food chain is, the easier becomes this balancing act.

## Wholesale or direct to consumers?

Maybe the most important operational decision is what type of buyer the food hub serves. Wholesale requires less transactions with generally few buyers, who demand a homogeneous product that meets higher food safety inspection standards. Especially if they target retail buyers, wholesale food hubs spend much effort on guaranteeing visual quality attributes (uniformity, no spots).

Direct to customer sales require packing and numerous small transactions to home customers. In general, food safety regulations require less certification than wholesale. If sales occur in a retail store (e.g. local food market), then consumers pay much attention to visual product quality. For box services that are packaged centrally and delivered directly, however, attributes such as taste, freshness, and source transparency are valued higher than visual attributes.

Food hubs often favour mixed models. Restaurants, small food co-ops and independent retailers are less stringent on food safety certification and offer an intermediate price point for tasty but less uniform products. For example, Common Market moves 80% of revenues in wholesale markets but makes significant profit from direct to consumer sales.

## Why is it so difficult to establish financially viable food hubs?

Nowadays, most food distribution systems operate at enormous scales and take advantage of high degrees of automation and optimization. Huge distribution enterprises with revenues of \$48 Billion aim at profit margins of half a percent. Food hubs generally move values of \$1-\$10 Million and have significantly higher per-unit costs, but also fewer intermediaries.

At any price point, food markets are extremely competitive. Producers who market directly to consumers (e.g. farm gate, farmers markets) survive because they retain every consumer dollar. However, they are also responsible for all ele-

ments of marketing, packing, and delivery. Wholesale producers on average receive only 17.4% of the retail prices. In order to compete on the global market, they require lowest production costs and an advantageous production setting (weather, soil, energy, infrastructure, etc).

Wholesale food hubs either compete with global wholesale markets of mainstream products, or they offer a product distinction that returns higher prices than the global market (e.g. "certified organic", "grass-fed", "naturally grown", "local from your county"). Problems occur if food hubs lose the product distinction during aggregation, because then the price point for a product significantly drops. For example, many small and micro producers use different genetics and expose their crop to some level of stress (imperfect soil type, some pest pressure). With slower plant growth, produce expresses more healthy plant metabolites and have denser taste. If such product is mixed with standard wholesale products, the distinguishing feature of a micro producer is lost.

## Success factors

Many of the food hubs that exist for several decades share commonalities. Their operational model clearly adds value to the existing food system. Lack of alternatives is also a great stimulator of change, as is the case for the La Montanita co-operative in New Mexico. Successful food hubs articulate values clearly and stay within their value proposition. Successful food hubs are pragmatic. For example, the mission of the non-profit Common Market targets local vulnerable communities. In order to achieve financial sustainability, Common Market has scaled out and now heavily relies on wholesale buyers, only offering a minute percentage of total sale to local communities. Producer-driven wholesalers can focus on a single product group, such as grass-fed beef or pastured poultry. Skilled staff that includes financial capacity and human resources experience s, and access to investment money, were also noted.

## What food hub operational model is best for us?

There is no silver bullet to answer this question. Each food hub needs to serve buyer needs within the local context. Considerations include the mission, the level of product distinction that is aspired, infrastructure and services that are already available in a community, experience and capacity that is available, and if the mission includes non-market objectives, the level of continued financing that can sustain a food hub. In general, food distribution provides minimal financial returns and any operational model need to take into consideration how financial viability shall be obtained. No examples exist that sell small quantities of expensively produced products to low-income customers without significant external funding.





## WHAT'S NEXT? .

### Eat Local Grey Bruce (ELGB) goes online!

Eat Local Grey Bruce will become our region's easiest access point to local food. ELGB is co-operative driven by small and micro producers that will sell the full spectrum of groceries to consumers and deliver directly to their home or rural pick-up locations. ELGB co-operative is owned by producer members as well as consumer members, so ELGB offers the shortest food chain possible.

Eat Local's member drive and start-up fundraiser starts ... NOW! Support us at [www.eatlocalgreybruce.ca](http://www.eatlocalgreybruce.ca), or invite us for a talk!

### Fruit Growing Workshops with Ken Taylor

Since the 1980's, Ken and Lorraine Taylor have pioneered several farm business ventures including a CSA, a certified organic farm food market, a seed company and a fruit tree nursery. Ken's science background led to many R&D projects, such as saving heritage genetics (Montreal melon, antique apples, etc) or breeding/selecting new fruit/veggie varieties better adapted to very extreme cold climates (-40 C). They were one of Canada's first organic fruit farms that has since evolved into a permaculture food forest .... also called agroforestry.

On Saturday, June 4th, Ken will offer two half day workshops at Persephone Market Garden, Conc Rd 3, #241063, Park Head on designing fruit orchards, one for backyard gardeners and one for ecological farmers:

- » Morning Session for Backyard Gardeners (9:30 AM - 12:30 PM)
- » Afternoon Session for Farmers (1:30 - 4:30 PM)

The cost for one session is \$50, HST included. For more information, please visit <http://gbcae.com/workshops.html>, or register at [info@gbcae.com](mailto:info@gbcae.com).

### Introduction to Beekeeping with Chuck Mitchell

Chuck Mitchell has moved to a farm in Walters Falls after working as organic inspector and USDA extension officer in Vermont. He has offered agroecological workshops for Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology and around the world, and continues to work as organic inspector in his retirement.

This two-part course will provide an opportunity for participants to get into hives and work hands-on with bees, learn about the basics of beekeeping, and get organized to have their own hives in the spring of 2017. The workshop will be hosted in Walters Falls, Grey County.

- » 1. In The Beeyard (Saturday, August 6th , 3:00 – 6:00 PM. Rain date Saturday August 13th)
- » 2. Getting your own hives (Saturday, November 5th, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM)

Each workshop costs \$20 per person. If you are registering for both workshops, then the cost is \$30. For more information, please visit <http://gbcae.com/workshops.html>, or register at [info@gbcae.com](mailto:info@gbcae.com).

### Agroecological Preparations series with Chuck Mitchell

As follow-up to last year's participatory workshop series, we will jointly prepare preparations such as indigenous microorganisms, compost teas, and others. The first workshop will take place at Better Together Farm in Williamsford, south of Owen Sound. We will prepare indigenous microorganisms that provide diverse microorganisms for enhancing soils, compost, or starting ferments. Other workshops will be set for end of June, end of July.

- » 1. Indigenous Microorganisms (Monday, May 23rd, 6:00 – 8:00 PM).  
*Location:* Better Together Farm, directly north of Williamsford, 316337 HWY 6
- » 2. Compost teas (End of June, TBD)
- » 3. Application technology at market garden scale (July, Persephone Market Garden)

Costs are \$15 each. Please register under [info@gbcae.com](mailto:info@gbcae.com).

### Intensive Grazing for dairy and meat production with Sarah Flack

Sarah Flack's focus is on helping to create more farms with good organic and grass based management systems, which allow farmers to create positive change in their landscapes, livestock, check book and farm family quality of life. She has worked with dairy, beef, sheep, goat and poultry farms, and is experienced with both organic and non-organic farming systems.

Sarah has a unique approach, which is based on what she learned while consulting, teaching and writing on the topic since the early 90's. She grew up on a family farm in Vermont, which used high stock density management intensive grazing to successfully improve the productivity and ecological health of the land and livestock. She later studied Holistic Planned Grazing as well as the science behind pasture management in graduate school.

Sarah Flack is a consultant specializing in providing practical information on grass based and organic livestock production to farmers, organizations, institutions and individuals. She has a diverse background in sustainable agriculture, which includes both on-farm and academic experience. She is known for her public speaking, workshops, books and numerous articles on a range of agricultural topics and has produced videos and webinars<sup>1</sup>.

*When:* Tuesday, August 2, 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

*Where:* (tentative) Ventry Hill, Dundalk, Ontario

Cost to be determined (we are still looking for sponsors). Please register under [info@gbcae.com](mailto:info@gbcae.com). Lunch will be served, please bring cash as this may be an extra cost. Also, we plan other workshops on Aug 3rd around Guelph and Aug 4th around Kingston.

### WORK WITH US !

Interested in working on issues surrounding food and agriculture? In need of local expertise? Get in touch! We are happy to work with individuals, organizations and businesses to foster the development of resilient farming and food systems. Within our group, we have a wide range of practical skills and knowledge to contribute.

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<sup>1</sup>Sarah is the author of *Organic Dairy Production*, and wrote the chapter on grazing management in *The Organic Dairy Handbook – A comprehensive guide for the transition and beyond*. She is also a co-author of *Transitioning to Organic Dairy – A self assessment workbook*, as well as many articles grass based and organic farming systems. She has written a new book on grass based livestock production which will be available from Chelsea Green Publishing in the spring of 2016.