

**Show Transcript**  
**Deconstructing Dinner**  
**Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY**  
**Nelson, B.C. Canada**

**September 11, 2008**

**Title: Local Grain Revolution II**

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**Transcriber: Emily Gordon**

*Jon Steinman:* And welcome once again to another episode of Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly one hour radio show and Podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman.

Today marks part II of a series, which, since the airing of part 1 in March 2008, has been having quite the significant impact around the world. And I'm speaking of our Local Grain Revolution series – one that has been documenting the creation of Canada's first community supported agriculture project (a CSA) *for grain*.

Launching the series in March we heard from one of the project's co-founders Matt Lowe, we heard from farmer Drew Gailius, and we listened in on segments from the first official meeting of the CSA founders and farmers held back in December of 07.

Of course a lot has transpired since then, and on July 13<sup>th</sup> I recorded the first gathering of CSA members and farmers. The day was a full-day event with members getting the chance to visit the farms growing their grain, to meet the farmers, *and*, to meet the grain, which for many members was a first.

We'll shortly hear the voices of farmers Keith Huscroft and Roy Lawrence, we'll hear the voice of Matt Lowe, the co-founder of the grain CSA, and we'll hear from Tammy Hardwick – the manager of the Creston & District Museum who shared with members a brief but important history of grain growing in the Creston Valley. And as a unique treat for the show, we'll also get a chance to meet one of the *grains* – Khorasan wheat – an ancient variety now growing in the Creston Valley of British Columbia, and one that gives off a unique and soothing sound as it blows in the wind. We'll listen to the sound of Khorasan wheat in just a moment.

**increase music and fade out**

If you miss any of today's part II of the Local Grain Revolution series, it will be archived on our website at [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca)

And one quick event announcement before embarking on today's broadcast: On September 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, the Nelson-Creston Grain CSA alongside Deconstructing Dinner

and the All Seasons Café are encouraging everyone to attend the Kootenay Harvest Revival in Nelson, BC – the event will act as a celebration of the historic harvest of grain that today's show is all about. On Friday the 19<sup>th</sup>, the Capitol Theatre in Nelson will be host to a narrative and theatrical history of food in the Kootenays featuring presentations by author and historian Eileen-Delehanty Pearkes who will speak on behalf of the Sinixt Nation, JJ Verigin who will speak on the history of the Doukhobors in the region, Keith Huscroft – a fourth generation Creston farmer who we'll hear from on today's show, Luanne Armstrong – an author and farmer located near the community of Wyndell in the Creston Valley; local actor and historian Richard Rowberry will share an animated history of fruit production in the region, Musicians Bessie Wapp and Earl Hamilton will be performing songs that are relevant to the topic of food and farming, and rounding off the evening, yours truly will be sharing a background on the many innovative food and farming projects happening in the region, and what residents can expect in the future. The MC for the evening will be Russell Precious – the co-founder of Capers Markets.

And the hope for the evening is that through sharing the history of what was *once* being grown and produced in the area (which I will add was a *LOT* of food), residents will hopefully be *further* inspired to move towards what *was once* possible to gather, hunt, fish, grow, process and preserve in the Kootenay region. And again, that's Friday September 19<sup>th</sup>, 7pm at the Capitol Theatre in Nelson. Tickets are being sold for \$6 at Otter Books and the All Seasons Café.

And then on Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup>, the All Seasons Café will be hosting a brunch starting at 10am thru till 1pm. And the brunch will consist of foods using local ingredients and most importantly using local grains. There will be presentations from Matt Lowe, Gregory Hemming, Luanne Armstrong, Abra Brynne and myself. And music will be provided by Bessie Wapp and Heavy Shtetl. And tickets for the brunch will be available at the All Seasons Café in Nelson for \$40. And you can give them a call at 250-352-7499.

The café will also be hosting a five course dinner on Sunday night paired with local wines and right now the evening is invite-only, but there is a chance based on the number of RSVPs received, that the dinner may be opened up to the public. So you can keep your eyes peeled for information about that, as that will also be a meal not to miss.

And more information on all of this event, the Kootenay Harvest Revival, can be found on the Deconstructing Dinner website. And organizers are encouraging people to get their tickets early as it will likely be a well-attended event.

### **soundbite**

In March of 2008, we launched the Local Grain Revolution series, one that has since been documenting the creation of Canada's first community supported agriculture project (a CSA) for grain.

It was in the summer of 2007 that Matt Lowe participated in an eat local challenge organized by the Nelson food security group Community Food Matters.

And upon taking the challenge, Matt learned that he was challenged to find local grains – a significant part of his diet and really most diets of North Americans.

And so he took matters into his own hands and contacted a friend of his in the Creston Valley who works with a conservation organization there, and in a rather short period of time, three farmers in the valley were contacted to grow grain as part of the CSA. Between then and the spring of 2008, 180 members in both the Nelson and Creston areas had committed \$100 to receive 100lbs of grain. There was also a bakery in Nelson (Au Soleil Levant) who committed to 20 shares.

Now since we first aired part I of this series in March of 2008, there has been quite the response to the project from across North America.

For one, the CSA found no problem filling the 200 member shares and no advertising was even necessary.

A farmer from Montana recently contacted Matt Lowe wanting to learn more about how such a project was launched as he too was interested in the prospects of such a model.

In April, Member of Parliament Alex Atamanenko mentioned the CSA in the House of Commons as an example of how some Canadians are working towards creating more responsible food systems. Atamanenko mentioned the CSA as part of his opposition to the biofuel bill recently passed.

And we've received word from listeners that because of that broadcast, they've since been growing grain in their own backyards.

There have been businesses in the Nelson area who are eager to become members next year and begin baking with the grains as soon as possible.

The Nelson Daily News and the Creston Valley Advance have run a number of articles about the CSA.

The B.C. Cattleman's Association contacted Matt Lowe recently upon learning of the CSA because they wanted to share the project with their members through their newsletter.

And just one day before this broadcast went to air, we received an email from a listener in New York City, saying how because of the broadcast, he went on a mission to find local grains, and upon being successful, that farm is now delivering grain to the vegetable CSA that he is a part of.

And this is just a handful of the impacts that the CSA is having.

But perhaps the most significant and most interesting one to address was when, in April of this year, a freelance reporter for the Globe and Mail came across the Deconstructing Dinner broadcast posted on The Tyee. The Tyee is the Vancouver-based on-line news magazine where we post our broadcasts each week. And using our broadcast as a foundation for the article, Fiona Morrow's piece titled Growing Against the Grain was published in the May 21<sup>st</sup> Life Section of the Globe and Mail – Canada's most read national newspaper.

And this is an interesting story. Most importantly, because Deconstructing Dinner has, since the show was first created, maintained a goal of providing content through alternative mediums and in doing so either *become* mainstream or at the very least *influence* mainstream media. And I would say, that the publication of this article in The Globe and Mail as a result of that broadcast is one of the greatest successes of this radio project to date.

But on another and more critical note, it was yet another sign of the poor state of Canada's mainstream media and the possible dangers that can exist when the mainstream media tries to cover the topic of agriculture.

Now we do have a link to the Globe and Mail article on our website, and what any reader taking a look at this article will notice, is that the article reads like a carbon copy print version of our March 13<sup>th</sup> 2008 broadcast, yet there was no mention of Deconstructing Dinner at any point throughout the article.

Now while it may very well have been a coincidence how identical the content was, it's also standard practice (albeit unethical) in the world of mainstream media to take content from other networks and reword it for their own use.

And so I contacted Matt Lowe and asked him about his phone conversation with the Globe and Mail freelance reporter Fiona Morrow who authored the article. Morrow had told Matt that she had learned of the CSA through this show. I asked him if what appeared in the article was what he shared with her. And without hesitation, Matt indicated that not only did the article print information that was incorrect, but there were a number of paragraphs of information that he did *not* share with Morrow, and which, could have only come from the Deconstructing Dinner broadcast – the only medium at that point that had covered the CSA.

And so not only was the article made possible *by* our broadcast, but even the *content* came from the broadcast itself. And as expected from Canada's mainstream media, there was *no* mention of our program anywhere in the article.

### **soundbite**

*JS:* Now there was another interesting lesson learned from the Globe and Mail's coverage of the grain CSA. It's only been in the past year that Canada's mainstream media has begun to cover agricultural issues in more depth – ever since the idea of local food went

mainstream. But there's a danger that accompanies this *new* attention to this important subject. As was emphasized in the article by Fiona Morrow, Canada's mainstream media has increasingly become reliant upon the rewriting of content found from other sources and is also restricted by deadlines, often bypassing any ethical considerations because of them.

And so what happens when the mainstream media, made up mostly of reporters working in four-walled offices in major urban centres tries to cover a subject that they, along with most Canadians have become so disconnected from? Well, rewriting content from other sources is one outcome, but the other can be captured in this:

As part of this CSA story, The Globe and Mail wanted a photograph for the article. Because the newspaper does not employ any photographers anywhere near the Nelson-Creston area, they called up Nelson Daily News photojournalist Timothy Schafer. Schafer, who has authored a number of articles about Deconstructing Dinner and the local food movement in the area, was eager to tell me of his conversation with the Photo Editor for the Globe and Mail whom he spoke with. Now remember this conversation took place at the beginning of May – and here is what the photo editor said to Schafer. He asked him, to go to Creston with Matt Lowe and take a picture of Matt standing in the fields of grain, so that Matt could be surrounded by the grain growing in the field.

And of course there's just one problem, this was early May, and the seed had only gone into the ground less than two weeks prior to their conversation.

And so here was the Photo Editor for Canada's National Newspaper having no idea that in early May, grain is only just coming out of the ground. And while this may not be surprising given how disconnected we've all become from our food, this instance of the Globe and Mail trying to cover this story, should make most Canadians skeptical of the how the country's most-read national newspaper covers agricultural issues.

### **soundbite**

*JS:* Now since our March broadcast on the CSA, the three Creston Valley farmers planted their seeds of Red Fife Wheat – a heritage variety, Hard Spring Wheat, Spelt, Oats and Khorasan Wheat. Khorasan is more commonly referred to by the trademark Kamut. And we'll learn a little more about Khorasan on today's broadcast.

But before we get to that, I do want to mention how Deconstructing Dinner has, since our most recent episode of the backyard chickens series, been airing some of our non-studio recordings in stereo. We do now own a stereo audio recorder with the hope that our recordings can create a more exciting listening experience and to bring you more into the shoes of those involved in the recording.

Now not all radio stations do transmit in stereo, so this is a feature that will *only* be available through those stations that do, and for those of you who listen through the show's Internet accessibility you will be able to enjoy some of our broadcasts in stereo.

And of course headphones are encouraged. And today's recordings are all recorded in stereo.

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, I traveled to Creston along with dozens of other Nelson residents where we met up with dozens more who live *in* Creston. All of us were members of the CSA, and all of us were about to embark on our first tour of the farms growing our grains. This was also an opportunity for the farmers and members to finally meet. Today's broadcast will take you, the listener, on that tour. And here's CSA co-founder Matt Lowe.

*Matt Lowe:* We're going to split up into two groups. Each group is going to visit one farm this morning. We're going to come together for lunch at a park in Lister and then each group is going to visit another farm. So I think the first thing we need to do is to divide up into two groups and maybe what we can do is really just split down the middle here. Now we're going to need a leader in terms of a lead car to get us to each of the first two farms, so -

*Karen:* I'm going to the Lawrence farm.

*ML:* Okay, great. And it's Karen right?

*Karen:* Yes.

*ML:* So Karen's going to be the lead car. So what we're going to have to do is to somehow get ourselves very organized in order that we follow Karen or we might not make it to the farm. And we have to stick together as convoys. Okay, and this group is going to go to the Huscroft's farm, which is in Lister. So who knows how to get to the Huscroft Farm on this side, or who knows Creston well?

*Gail:* Well, I'll lead on this side.

*ML:* Yeah, okay great. So Gail's going to be the lead car, getting you to the Huscroft Farm.

*JS:* My first stop was the Lawrence's farm – located in the most southern reaches of the Creston Valley. In fact, the southern border of their farm is the border between the United States and Canada.

Roy Lawrence grew up on the farm and he is a third-generation farmer. The Lawrence's have viewed the CSA as an opportunity to help them transition from conventional farming methods to organic methods. However, they're not interested in being certified organic. This is yet another benefit that the CSA can provide to farmers, because there we were, as members and eaters, seeing first hand the grains being grown, and meeting the very farmer growing our grain. And what more certification did we need.

*Roy Lawrence (sounds of walking):* We'll go down this way and I will show you – we'll start from one side to the other here.

*Male Voice:* The big fields of yellow that we're seeing around, what is that?

*RL:* That's our canola.

*Male Voice:* It is canola. Okay.

*Another Male Voice:* Yeah, that's the canola.

*RL:* This is what we call Kamut. It's a Polish wheat. It's a very big-kernelled wheat. I'm not exactly sure but I think it might be more for pastas, but I'm not sure.

*Female Voice:* I make bread out of it.

*RL:* Do you? Well that could be too. But it's got a short head, but very thick, very big kernels. As you can see, it's the cleanest stuff and I'm not exactly sure why except for possibly the height gives too much competition for the wheat. It is good. That's the nice aspect of it. Of course the down side of it: the taller the crop the more possibility of it laying flat and then it makes it hard to harvest. And that's bad. (laughter)

*Male Voice:* You could always prop it up.

*RL:* Well, I could get a bunch of sticks.

*Male Voice:* Do you swathe or do you straight combine?

*RL:* I try to straight combine as much as possible. The way this stuff is going it will all be ready to harvest probably beginning of September, would be probably more late. So we should have really good weather, and this stuff in particular, it's standing nice. I believe the lengths which is over there we'll have to swathe because I think they'll continue to grow, and what we've done here is we have a wheat midge problem, which is a little bug that gets in the wheat at the flowering stage and lays an egg and then the little larva will eat the kernel. And so what we've done is we've planted in the middle of our barley field hoping to hide it from the bugs. (laughter) But the idea is that, you know, the little bugs will come to the flower, to the smell, and so if there's not enough smell out there, they're not really attracted. But that's what we've done, and so we have barley here, but the barley is not part of the CSA, that's just what I do. Okay. So we've got the barley there, and it goes around the entire field.

*Female Voice:* So this is a variety of wheat indigenous?

*RL:* Yes. It's an old variety I believe.

*Male Voice:* How do you fertilize this – an area this size?

*RL:* Well, being as this is the first year for going naturally grown, I haven't put any fertilizer on, but the process is that I'm going to start at the far end and I'm going to, I've got barley there right now, which I'm going to plough down as a green manure crop, which will be the fertilizer. And then it will be a process –

*Male Voice:* It will rotate.

*RL:* Just keep rotating, and probably it will have a plough down crop every three to four years.

*JS:* Now it was around this point that Matt Lowe shared some interesting and surprising information with members. As many North Americans are likely unaware, Kamut such as the grain we were standing in front of, is not the actual name of the grain. In fact, Kamut is a trademark that was created by a company in Montana as an assurance to eaters, that that grain meets the organic standards set out by the company. Now because this particular grain did not pass through the Kamut company and their certification process, the grain CSA is *not* permitted to call it Kamut. In fact it was following the first broadcast of Deconstructing Dinner and the subsequent article in The Globe and Mail, that the Kamut company sent Matt Lowe a letter that sought to clarify his use of the word, and here's Matt Lowe describing this letter to members.

*ML:* I just wanted to say that Kamut is a trademark name. There's a company that has taken this grain that has a scientific name and given it the common name Kamut that it uses to market it and they sent me a letter recently. It was a very pleasant letter, but they said that they'd heard about this project and heard us using the term Kamut, which I've tried not to use. It's hard to get out of the habit though. And they asked nicely if we wouldn't do that because that's their name, and it's actually, I found out that the scientific name, or the common name, is not Polish Wheat. There's a –

*Male Voice:* Khorasan.

*ML:* Is it khorasan?

*Male Voice:* Yeah, with a k-h-o-r, khorasan.

*Another Male Voice:* So anyway, there's – (voices, indistinct, talking among themselves)

*Male Voice:* Where's this company located?

*ML:* It's in Montana.

*Male Voice (over continuing background conversation):* Oh, that's Bob Quinn, that's the guy whose market tour I was telling you about. He's Mr. Kamut.



*ML:* Man: Yeah, I mean, the letter was totally respectful and it wasn't threatening a lawsuit or anything. It was just, please, this is the grain that we market. We use that grain as seed for this here, so just to respect that for us to use the scientific name.

*JS:* As we stood in front of the Khorasan wheat, the members began asking some interesting questions. And it was following the response to those questions that members applauded Roy Lawrence. And I'll go out on a limb and suggest that this was likely one of the first times where eaters have stood on a Canadian farm and applauded a Canadian farmer.

And you'll also hear an insect trying to pollinate my microphone.

*RL:* We have a seed cleaner. We have to get it up and running. I am assuming that you guys would like clean seed too. (laughter)

*Female Voice:* Explain to me what that means? I'm not... It separates the weeds from the normal seeds?

*RL:* Well, yeah. A seed cleaner works more on size and weight. And so if it's a real light seed it will blow it out and if it's a real, like beans, if it's a big kernel, all the small stuff will come out and the chaff will be blown out because it's light. And so therefore you will, in theory, as you work the seed cleaner, you will get just the type of seed you want.

*ML:* Just say that the farmer's that have joined us in this are a real adventurous bunch and they've been keen all the way along to experiment with many different kinds of crops, and they're all learning, just like the rest of us. So, I'm just so appreciative of the farmers that are working with us. (applause)

*RL:* It will be a learning process. We're going to keep track on everything we've done to it. This is all new to me so we seeded it and then the process that I understand that works fairly well is you wait until it germinates and just starts to come out of the ground and then you harrow, which will set the weeds back but the grain will have the jump on the wheat. So we tried that, and I'm not sure how it worked.

*Female Voice:* ... see it here.

*RL:* Well the grain survived real well.

*Female Voice:* It's beautiful.

*RL:* This stuff is actually really clean. There are some plants that will give off a deterrent for other weeds, and I'm not sure that this hasn't got it because there's very little that shows up in here.

*Female Voice:* What is the little yellow flowered plant?

*RL:* This stuff over here?

*Female Voice:* Yes.

*RL:* That actually is wild mustard.

*Female Voice:* It is wild mustard. Now are farmers growing mustard? Or is that canola?

*RL:* Canola. That's canola.

*Another Female Voice:* Is that organic canola that we see all over?

*RL:* No. (laughs) Anything you see other than here, is most likely not organic.

*JS:* Moving on from the Khorasan wheat, we passed by another acre of crops – lentils. Now lentils were never part of the CSA package that members committed to in the spring, but the Lawrence's decided to plant a test crop to see how they grew. And the response from members (including myself) upon coming across the lentils was not surprising but it certainly captured just how disconnected we've all become from our food. Because upon arriving at the lentils, a number of members pulled out their cameras to take pictures, as if the lentils were a tourist attraction. Even Roy himself had never grown lentils before, nor has he ever come across any other Creston farmer doing so. Roy suggested that the lentils *may* be included as a bonus for CSA members.

And it was at this point that Matt Lowe asked Roy why he decided to join the CSA and why he decided to transition to grow his crops naturally.

*RL:* Why I decided to join the CSA?

*ML:* Yeah.

*RL:* To be honest with you, I never had an idea to join. I didn't even know about the CSA, except for somebody gave Brenda my name and she approached me, and we have been milling our own wheat for flour and we quite enjoy that. We quite appreciate knowing what we have there, and so both Sherry and I thought it would be quite an interesting thing to do. I really don't like spraying myself. I can see the effects on people, at least I think I can. I know it really affects me just smelling it. As well, I never knew there was a group of people out there that would actually appreciate farmers. (laughter)

*Male Voice:* Hear, hear.

*Female Voice:* We feel the same way.

*RL:* Well, honestly.

*Male Voice:* This is half of us.

*Female Voice:* This is half of us. We're –

*RL:* I understand that. So I appreciate and I like the idea of actually, because I believe that there's a good proportion of our society that hasn't got a clue where food comes from. So, as much as I'm not a people person, I think this is wonderful for people to see farms, and see where things actually grow. And some of the frustrations that farmers have and some of the challenges that we go through just to produce food. And honestly I don't think that you'll, I don't think there are farmer's out there that really intentionally grow stuff harmful for people but that's just the way the general thing has gone. You know, we kind of grow into it. So I guess, why we joined was because we liked the idea of getting rid of the sprays and the chemical fertilizers. And also to, quite obviously, we're farmers, we have to live just like everyone else. So we have to make a living. And so this is an alternative for us to make a living doing what we like.

*JS:* After meeting the Khorsan wheat and the lentils, members also had a chance to meet the hullless oats that are also part of the CSA, and following which we moved on to the Red Fife Wheat and the Spelt.

*RL (over sounds of walking):* This is our Red Fife. It's a smaller kernels, longer heads. Probably will yield pretty close to the same, I would think, but it's just a different type of plant.

*Female Voice:* What makes it special or distinct from other wheat?

*RL:* Well, it's a really old variety and I believe the gluten is a little down on it. So it makes it more acceptable to some people. And then we have our spelt. And the spelt is very aggressive and actually very early you can see it's already got a kernel. Nice plump kernel.

*Male Voice:* This is also a first?

*RL:* This is a first for me, yes. Spelt creates a little problem in the harvesting because it doesn't combine very easy. Some of the hulls stay on and so that's one of the things we're going to have to really experiment with and see what we have to do to get them cleaned up to sell. And it also seems like it resists the weeds a little bit better than some of the other too. But I believe it must be a fairly short season on spelt, because it will be the first to come on.

*JS:* One of the nicest outcomes of the tour for me was never feeling the need to ask many questions of the farmers because the members themselves were asking great questions. This next clip starts off with a response from Roy to the question, "will the high price of wheat help farmers?"

*RL:* Probably never. What has happened is the price of wheat, as you've noticed on the news, has gone way up, right? The minute the prices went up the fertilizer companies

said oh, the farmers can handle a little more and they've put their price of fertilizer up. Fuel, obviously you all know that fuel has gone way up and it really hurts us.

*Male Voice:* Would you say you're encouraged by what happens so far in terms of the potential for your financial viability and the opportunity to plant more in the future? Is that something that's encouraging for you?

*RL:* Yes. I'm very encouraged that there's actually people out there that want to see the farmer get a fair – and work together. Before this point it's a real dog eat dog situation. You grow your grain and you try to market it and you have to be cutthroat, you know. Nobody cares.

*Male Voice:* Other than offering a secure market, is there any other perks that you'd say being involved with the CSA?

*RL:* Well, actually, I'm quite enjoying this. (laughter)

*Female Voice:* Moral support.

*RL:* I think it, well, it has opened my eyes to alternatives, because as everybody, we get kind of set in our ways and we don't really think out of the box. This has really stretched me. And I can see where it makes our farming practice more independent. Like I'm not depending on the chemical companies.

*Male Voice:* In Alberta, we have hailstorms and variable weather patterns, lack of rain and so on. What are your weather challenges here?

*RL:* We have very, very little weather challenges. We seldom get hail. I have never seen a crop failure. I've never seen hail that actually has damaged a crop. I have seen it very dry and so therefore our yields are down, but actually, I don't worry about that. The only part of the weather that we worry about is haying, making sure we get enough dry time to get our hay up.

*JS:* And that was Roy Lawrence, one of three farmers growing grain for the Nelson-Creston grain CSA. One of the most inspiring responses from Roy was following a question from a member who asked if he was interested to plant more crops next year as part of the CSA. And his response was an enthusiastic, yes.

### **soundbite**

*JS:* And you're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner – a syndicated weekly one-hour radio show and Podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman and you're listening to part II of our Local Grain Revolution series and if you miss any of today's broadcast, it will be archived on our website at [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca)

We're currently listening to recordings from the first tour of Canada's first community supported agriculture project for grain. All of the members on the tour (including myself) put \$100 up front at the beginning of the season with the intention that we would all receive 100lbs of grain. Today's broadcast is featuring recordings from the first tour where members and farmers had the chance to meet one another.

And another reminder about the upcoming Kootenay Harvest Revival event being held on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> in Nelson, B.C. The event will act as a celebration of the CSA's harvest of grain and it will be an opportunity for non-CSA members to also meet the farmers. More information on the event can be found on our website or by picking up information at either Kootenay Co-op Radio or Otter Books, both in Nelson.

Now before we continue on with the day-long tour held in July of this year 2008, I do want to share with you something a little different. For all of us members there on the Lawrence's farm, we were introduced to a lot of new information, new sights, new smells, but also new sounds. As someone who has never grown up around any grain, I had never actually taken the time to *listen* to what grain sounds like. And so take a listen to this next segment – it's a one minute recording of Khorasan wheat, blowing in the wind.

**sound of khorasan in the wind (a little like distant water flowing, or a soft rainstick, but with a more rustling sound)**

*JS:* Halfway throughout the day, the two groups of CSA members converged once again for lunch at a park where Tammy Hardwick – the manager of the Creston Museum, also shared a brief but fascinating history of grain growing in the Creston Valley. And here's a short recording of that history.

*Tammy Hardwick:* A little bit about Creston's grain industry itself. It's one of the oldest in the Creston Valley. In fact, Reclamation Farm down at the south end of the Valley, was established in 1892. I'm not sure if they actually were growing grain out there in 1892 but it was within a very few years of that. Their first challenge though was stopping the Kootenay River from flooding their grain farms every single year. And so we didn't see any widescale grain growing in the valley until the mid-1930s. Before that there was some in Canyon and in Erickson, and it was pretty good stuff. In fact, Mrs. Andy Kelsey of Erickson was the first woman ever to win the world wheat title. It had always been World Wheat King up until 1957. They had to change it to World Wheat Queen because she won it. And she repeated her triumph in 1958, but wasn't allowed to compete in 1959. The fields in Canyon and Erickson because it's all these mountains and foothills and such, they tend to be quite small. So there were these wheat barons from all over the world came out to Erickson to see just how Mrs. Kelsey managed to grow such spectacular wheat. And they knocked on her front door and she opened it and greeted them and welcomed them and brought them in through her house out the back door to her patch of wheat. So the following year they changed the rules. You had to have a minimum acreage in cultivation before you could enter the world wheat championship. From 1892 on up to 1934/35 there were several attempts to reclaim the flats. The

Kootenay River flooded every year and almost every year the entire area from one side of the Valley to the other turned into one great big lake. In 1892/93 they started building dykes at the very south end of the valley. Winter of 1893/94, mother nature had an attitude problem. Huge flood in the spring of 1894. All of the dykes washed away. That was the same story for the next 30 or 40 years. In 1934/35, though, they got this brilliant idea of diverting the Goat River. Finally managed to get all the dykes built, all the way along the Kootenay River. 1935 no flood, lovely huge crops of wheat coming off the flats. Two grain elevators built downtown, one in Wynndel and the very had really never looked back from there. There was a flood in 1938 and another in 1948, but not enough to really set back the grain growing industry in this area.

*JS:* Now while grain growing did take off following the dyking of the rivers, there was another problem that contributed to the eventual demise of grain growing in the valley – and that was the Canadian Wheat Board. And here again is Tammy Hardwick.

*TH:* What did set it back though was the Canadian Wheat Board. See the Canadian Wheat Board has always controlled the amount of wheat that any particular farmer could bring into the elevators. And that quota was set at 5 bushels per acre. Creston typically gets 40 bushels per acre of wheat and 100 bushels per acre of oats. Now under Canadian Wheat Board regulations, if it's food grade wheat, you could not sell it anywhere but through the Canadian Wheat Board elevators. And you could only bring 5 bushels per acre to the Canadian Wheat Board elevators. So what do you do with the rest? We had granaries popping up all over the flats. Hundreds of them, damned right full. And if there ever had been a bad year, they'd have taken the five bushels per acre out of those granaries, sold them through the Wheat Board and everything would have been good. But we hardly ever had a crop failure. As a result, a lot of the farmers started looking at different types of crop. And in the 1930s we had lots of wheat, lots of oats, barley, and rye. By the 1970s those had almost completely disappeared in favour of canola, which we still see quite a bit, potatoes, which not so much anymore, timothy, hay. So a shift in the change of crops being grown led to a decline in the use of the grain elevators. One of them was closed in 1971, the other in 1982. There's been no shipments through Canadian Wheat Board elevators since then, though there is still a bit of grain growing in the valley. Walter Easton for example, is still growing some out there. He's the one that gave us the samples that we took pictures of for our booklet.

*JS:* And that was Tammy Hardwick, manager of the Creston Museum.

Now the laws governing the Canadian Wheat Board only apply in areas of Canada referred to as “designated areas.” And in 1998, the Creston-Wyndell district was removed from that classification. This was following the passing of Bill C-4 in the House of Commons in 1998. And a history of that bill will be linked to from the Deconstructing Dinner website.

But now lets move on to the second farm that CSA members visited that day, and that was the farm of Keith Huscroft. His great-grandparents were the first white settlers in the Creston Valley, making Keith a fourth-generation farmer. He uses horses as much as he

can to help with his farming practices, and his farm is located in Lister just south of Creston.

*Keith Huscroft (sounds of walking):* Okay, boy people are going to – We'll see the ducks when we come back! Okay, well, I guess everybody can, they can hear me. Okay, so how many people here are members again, like I had a show of hands? Yeah I remember this last time. How many people aren't? Everybody's a member. Okay, beautiful.

*Male Voice:* Why?

*KH:* Well because I know –

*Male Voice:* Are there spies? (laughter)

*KH:* No. I'm just kind of curious because as a member I would imagine you know what is going on. You bought the shares. It's been explained to you what you're going to get. Basically what I'm doing, I think.

*Male Voice:* Yep.

*KH:* A quick history of the farm is I've lived here for the better part of my life. It's been in the family in one shape or form since, you know, the Huscroft's were the first ones to own it.

*Male Voice:* That's why you're up here, because it didn't flood?

*KH:* Yeah, like they were, the family actually preempted land there in 1892, like the land exactly next door, and though this sat here uninhabited I don't think that it was actually owned by one of my relatives until a few years later. So probably a hundred years, or in there, in the same family. Since I've owned it, it's been fertilized once. So once in 25 years has it ever seen a chemical fertilizer. Never any sprays. So it's organic, although it's not certified organic. It's composted. Everything I do is to organic standards or better. And then I guess that's about it. Okay, so what we have here – this is the test plot here. We have, in the far end of this field, we have a two acre section of kamut, or Polish wheat, and then we have another variety of wheat, which I don't know what it is, but I got it from Drew Gailius, one of the other guys that are in this, from Canyon. This is barley. Next to the barley is Red Fife Wheat. That is a heritage variety that we're doing. And next to that is mostly weeds, but it's supposed to be the hullless oats, but because of the weather and the timing and everything, the weeds have got the better part of that even though the oats will be fine and we'll get some out of it. You just can't really see the oats all that easy. So what we're going to do is we're going to wander up here. We're going to go to the next field because that gives you a little bit better view of the farm and what I'm going to do. So everybody here's able to walk and the heat's not going to bother you, because if it is you can go sit in the shade until we get back. Okay? Okay. So, any questions before we leave, right off this?

*Female Voice:* You just use vegetable compost?

*KH:* No, it's all animal manure.

*Female Voice:* You do have animal manure.

*KH:* And carbon. Hay or straw. My uncle owns a dairy farm, and over the last six years we've had – this was all pasture last year. We used to raise cows, but because of the government legislation, and the border and everything, cows became very unprofitable very quickly. So it's a farm in fluid motion, what was corrals and pens last year is now fields. This will move to over there next year 'cause, you know, it has to be in the rotation. The fields are so fertile that I got a good crop of weeds and wheat. Equally as good, as healthy. There's a vibrant crop of wheat in there and there's a viable crop of cereal grain. So it's really not affecting, it's not affecting the barley at all. And the wheat that has the bit of weeds in it is, the most adversely affected was the oats but because we got the seed late, it was a cold spring, and this is the second year the grain's been planted on the field, like last year I had an oat crop in here. The weeds taken over a little bit. Next year it wouldn't be a problem, no matter what the weather was because it's a new field. So I don't necessarily have to lead. So just follow there to the corner back there, and I'll kind of be right in the middle of you. A little discussion.

*JS:* As we moved through Keith's farm we skirted just alongside the road and it was there that members learned that Keith's neighbour is none other than Bountiful – the polygamous community that has been making international headlines in recent years. So there we were in a rather remote part of Canada, where international headlines were being made both on Keith's farm, and next door. One member joked that the area is clearly fertile ground. And sure enough, as we walked alongside the edge of Keith's farm, The Bishop of Bountiful - Winston Blackmore himself, drove by.

*KH (sounds of walking, and of a car driving by):* And that was Mr. Blackmore, the famous Winston.

*Female Voice:* The famous Winston.

*Another Female Voice:* Always smiling.

*Male Voice:* He has thirty wives and thirty five kids?

*Female Voice:* That's that one?

*Male Voice:* That's that one.

*Female Voice:* Are you serious? Oh no!

*Another Female Voice:* Yes, we were talking about it.



*Male Voice:* Did you just wave to him?

*Female Voice:* That's right. No wonder -

*Male Voice:* I saw a jacket as he went by.

*Female Voice:* No wonder. Oh yeah.

*Another Female Voice:* I was wondering why you had a big smile on your face. He's thirty one now.

*KH:* Yeah. Thirty four.

*Female Voice:* He's probably wondering what we're doing here.

*KH:* Yeah, and -

*Female Voice:* Is this the same stuff?

*KH:* This is because that's the... Okay. Excuse me for a minute! I'm just going to answer one question one time. She said how come the oats are doing better here. Because last year's field came down about just before the gulley, and went that way. And this was all in pasture. So, this was really the first time that this ground was broken, so the weeds - there's no weed competition, so as long as you know ahead of time, like I didn't know about the hundred mile diet until last winter, so nothing was able to be prepared. So I just used the field that was ready or close to ready. So, the weeds should never be a problem, or won't be a problem in ongoing years. Unless you want weeds and I'll grow a pasture for you. (indistinct question) I have an old, I bought an old combine in Canyon, a real quarter-sized one. Instead of having a 24, I've got a 12.

*Male Voice:* Oh yeah.

*KH:* So that's going to do it this year. And it's kind of small and unique. And it could be run on alcohol because it's an old, it's a combine from the 40s that was on an experimental farm in Abbotsford. Really good shape. Run by the government. So it's a cherry of a little thing, but very compact, but very scaled down, and you've got to go slower. You do half as much. Interesting. Okay, so. This gives us a little better outlay of the farm. What we basically have is two deep gulleys between here and my mother's place. Mom's got the house up the hill. It's kind of got a gentle slope, just until you see the - it doesn't really matter if you can see it or not. And it takes a wicked dip. It scares you. You wouldn't want to be in something sideways on a tractor or horses or anything because it's got probably a 10 or 11 degree slope on it. A lot. Then we've got another wicked dip that only ever grows anything like gophers and scary stories. Up again and then we have this level plateau here. And this crop here will move into this field into the middle field. So whatever we decide to grow next year will be grown here. So, anyway, but organic.

*Female Voice:* How do you prepare this ground for grain tomorrow?

*KH:* I'll take a cultivator, tractor and a cultivator and I'll work it up hard. Then I'll put a disc on it and then –

*Female Voice:* In the new modern age of farming is roundup used?

*KH:* Roundup? Would be great. I've never used chemicals but I have relatives and stuff –

*Female Voice:* that do.

*KH:* – that do. And if you put the herbicide on here, it would break down the sod and you would have nothing to worry about.

*Female Voice:* Yeah, roundup would.

*KH:* Except that eventually, when you – it will kill you. (laughter) Because I think Monsanto lies. Well, lets keep going here, just down to the next field. If you see a rock, pick it up. (walking and distant conversation sounds continue) But like I said before, it's really hard to have a crop failure.

*Male Voice:* Yeah.

*KH:* The yield might go up or down a little over the –

*Male Voice:* Yeah.

*KH:* Generally we're not in an area where we're going to get a flood or – [raises voice] Okay, so what we have here is another little field of barley we planted two weeks after the stuff there. Was an after thought. I just, I had a driveway running in here and it got compost piled against the fence so after it was moved I had some bare ground, so I thought I'd just come out enough to make it worth while to haul a seed drill here. So this ground is the same as this ground. It's just as fertile. Nothing extra was added here that isn't already here. And as you can see for being two weeks behind that it's still doing really good. Came up good. It's fertile ground. Now another reason I bring you here is because we're going to do a comparison between here and the next door neighbour. Not that it's him, because he rents his land out, but it's a little history lesson. He doesn't look after that place at all. Last year the person that rented it put \$15,000 into clearing, picking rocks with fuel, seed. I put a real good genetically modified hybrid, whatever was in there, and it didn't come. So, he called a guy from the Interior Reforestation out, who couldn't figure out why after spending all this money – it was probably \$5,000 for the fertilizer – why they couldn't get a crop off of there. So I don't know what he told him, but I know, because I was out in my field, he drove his truck right up to that field, which was in oats last year which was in, like this tall, and you know this was probably three weeks ago, but I got it in at the beginning of April last year, so I had an amazing crop,

three feet tall two months into it. So he took a picture of that and they put it into their brochure that they put out this year, a picture of my organic field in their brochure, not saying that this was a field by them, but just saying that the local area grows great crops. And so he has a picture of my composted organic oats there on his brochure selling his fertilizer, when he should have had a picture of a dust pile saying it didn't work. So. And this is corporate, I think this is fairly normal for marketing. It's an awesome marketing ploy.

*Female Voice:* Oh my goodness.

*KH:* Because you want, it's all in the photo. What's that?

*Female Voice:* Was it a Monsanto product?

*KH:* No it was Interior Reforestation sells fertilizer out of Cranbrook. So. But I seen him, you know, I seen him. Because I was driving by with my tractor and I seen him take the picture, so it really interests me. And when, through a neighbour who gets, I was looking for, to buy gypsum for this, which is a rock dust. Picked up the brochure, flipped it over. Little picture down in the corner, about two inches by three inches. And I recognized my shed in the background and I said that's, you guys are a bunch of liars. But I'm glad that I made the publication. (laughter) So anyway, as you look even now, this year he put a lot of money into it again this year and it's still not growing.

*Female Voice:* There's nothing.

*KH:* So, now, next year because it's been loaded with the chemical fertilizers, which is just bad husbandry. He should have put a cover crop in or something because it's been neglected for a long time. No fault to the owner except that he doesn't want to do it and of course no really fault to the guy who's renting it because there's only so much money you can put into anything and still try to recupe a profit, so nobody's going to do it. It's bad enough, or it's expensive enough to do it to your own place, you're not going to put a lot of output into somebody else's. So next year if you come back again and we're going to see what's going on, it will be really interesting to see if anything grows there.

*JS:* And this is Deconstructing Dinner. You've been listening to a segment from a tour of Keith Huscroft's farm in the Creston Valley of British Columbia. Keith is one of three farmers growing grain for the Nelson-Creston grain community supported agriculture project. Now we did look into this company Interior Reforestation based in Cranbrook, British Columbia, as we were curious about the fertilizer products they sell, and I *did* discover that the products they sell are produced by Agrium; one of the country's largest fertilizer producers that *was* mentioned here on the show before as one of the many companies who strategically raise the price of their products any time the price of grain goes up. And this effectively restricts farmers from ever earning a decent living farming.

And before wrapping up today's broadcast I do want to encourage a visiting of our website where photographs from the tour will be posted. Again, our website is

deconstructingdinner.ca and you can select the Local Grain Revolution link listed along the right-hand column to view the photos.

And also a reminder that the Kootenay Harvest Revival will be happening in Nelson, BC on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. The event will be celebrating the harvest of the grain CSA and Keith Huscroft will be speaking at the event among many others. And the Harvest Revival will be held at the Capitol Theatre and All Seasons Café. And more information is listed on our website or at Kootenay Co-op Radio and Otter Books in Nelson. Again that's September 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. And you can stay tuned for part III of the Local Grain Revolution series when we'll hear segments from the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting between the CSA founders and farmers.

And closing out today's part II here's one more clip from Keith Huscroft's farm. It's a segment that nicely captures the relationship that can form between eater and farmer.

*KH:* I kind of think as we go along, I expect the same kind of commitment out of you as you do to me to stick with it and hold on. But every year we should be able to put in a new variety of something and test it out because what are we doing but we're just sort of trying to (a) keep the farmer employed but also we like to enjoy our food and

*Female Voice:* yeah.

*KH:* - try new things. It's not life threatening, yet. So.

*Female Voice:* So will you harvest this barley or turn it under?

*KH:* No, I'll harvest this barley. All the barley will – I've got a new little combine I'm just itching to try it out. (laughter). Well, I'm not sure just what the yield will be but it doesn't really matter. The straw will be worked under. The grain itself will be stored and fed to something.

*Female Voice:* And when will you harvest this?

*KH:* I'll say that this is a month away. That's two weeks.

*Female Voice:* Really?

*KH (female voice makes sounds of agreement):* Well, I'm guessing. This might be a month and a half and that might be a month, but you generally – end of August is when you take barley off. But we had a cold spring. And the weather's different. I don't know about in your area, but we're experiencing way more wind this year than we ever had before.

*Child (in background):* Dad. I'm going

*Male Voice:* Did you notice any other differences?

*KH:* The weeds are growing bigger whether that's my fertility's going way up or more carbon dioxide in the air, I'm not sure, but when I was a kid I never remember burdock more than two or three feet high. I've got seven foot burdock now.

*Male Voice:* Wow.

*KH:* So either I'm just the best weed grower in the valley or things are changing, I don't know.

*Matt Lowe:* Given that you're moving toward retirement now, do you think that still this project has a place in coming years and as it develops a bit more?

*KH:* Oh sure. I mean, I'm hopeful that it would make the farm viable for either a son or a grandson to come, because I'm not leaving and they're going to have to drag me out of here. And in the token, there isn't that much work that I can't do it until old age one way or another or grower or somebody to help me. I got six grandsons coming up, so there's got to be one of them. (laughter) So anyway, besides that, but I don't see a problem with sustainability and as long as this, really, this whole farm is fluid. I mean, what was corrals or what was whatever can become something else as long as we have a good soil and we do. There's nothing that we can't produce in this farm, or can't try something. Whether it all works I'm not sure, but it's up to you.

### **ending theme**

*JS:* That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, produced and recorded at Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman. I thank my technical assistant John Ryan.

The theme music for Deconstructing Dinner is courtesy of Nelson-area resident Adham Shaikh.

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