

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

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**Local Grain Revolution IX**

**Producer/Host: Jon Steinman**  
**Transcript: Jennifer D'Souza**

*Jon Steinman:* Welcome to Deconstructing Dinner a weekly syndicated radio program produced in the studios of Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman and today marks the 9<sup>th</sup> installment in our popular series The Local Grain Revolution. A series that has become a pretty strong focus here on the show as an example of one of many projects underway throughout North America that is seeking to redefine how communities can access safe, affordable, nutritious and equitable supply of food.

The Local Grain Revolution has focused on the Kootenay Grain CSA or community supported agriculture project that launched into its first year throughout the 2008 growing season when three farmers in the Creston Valley of British Columbia planted 15 acres of grain for 180 members and 1 business. The grain CSA is the first of its kind in Canada and one of only a handful in North America and has helped inspire other similar and like-minded projects to sprout up as well, all of which have been helped along by Deconstructing Dinner's ongoing and in-depth coverage of the Grain CSA's evolution. And so on today's broadcast we continue with our detailed coverage of the CSA's evolution and zero in once again on some of the meetings of the CSA's steering committee as they discuss year two of the project.

These and past recordings of the meetings of the Grain CSA is a listening and learning opportunity not often found within media. And of the hours and hours of audio that we've recorded, this next hour will feature some of the more compelling discussions and debates that took place not long after the completion of the CSA's year one. These segments will introduce the CSA's decision to triple in size and incorporate more businesses into the project and introduce yet another interesting model that has since been called RSA or Retail Supported Agriculture.

**increase music and fade out**

*JS:* One announcement to share with you before we launch into part nine of our Local Grain Revolution series is the return of Saskatchewan farmer Percy Schmeiser to B.C, a familiar voice here on the show and certainly one of the most well known farmers in the world. Percy will be returning to British Columbia in September and touring throughout the interior of the province speaking once again to farmers and eaters on the dangers of

genetically engineered food. Percy did visit B.C. last year in 2008 when he helped launch another project that we've also been following closely here on the show, G.E. Free Kootenays, a campaign currently underway in the Kootenay region of the province that is seeking to establish a region-wide zone that remains free of genetically engineered plants and trees. The campaign has successfully worked with three municipalities who have since declared themselves G.E. Free communities, and as part of Percy's return to the region, he'll be speaking in communities where farming is a significant part of the local economy and in some cases are areas where genetically engineered crops are currently being cultivated. Percy's talk will therefore be acting as a great opportunity to engage in a dialogue with local farmers and explore what alternatives to growing genetically engineered crops might be available to them. Of course, the Kootenay Grain CSA that we'll be speaking of today is just one great example of one of those alternatives to growing G.E. crops. Grain CSA farmer Keith Huscroft will also be joining Percy as he launches his tour in Creston on September 15th. Percy will then travel to the city of Grand Forks where he'll speak on September 16<sup>th</sup>, Salmon Arm, September 18<sup>th</sup>, Vernon, September 19<sup>th</sup>, and Kelowna, September 20<sup>th</sup>.

More information on the Percy Schmeiser tour is posted on our website at [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca) and we encourage you to pass along word to your friends or email lists about the tour. We've also included a "ShareThis" icon on that web page which can be used to share information about the tour through any social networking sites that you may use.

### **soundbite**

*JS:* Also to report is a recent article published on the U.S. based website, The Mother Nature Network. One of the Network's writers compiled a list of the Top 11 Green Food Radio Shows in the United States and Deconstructing Dinner made it onto the list and is the only Canadian show among the 11. A link to that article is posted on the Deconstructing Dinner website.

And also in the news, and of a topic that will lead us into the focus of the show today, was a commentary that appeared in the August 19<sup>th</sup> edition of one of Canada's national newspapers, the National Post. Published in the paper's Financial Post section, the commentary was written by Manitoba farmer Rolf Penner who is also the vice-president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. Now we mentioned this organization back in May, shortly after they, and eight other organizations in Canada, the U.S. and Australia issued a statement calling for the development and commercialization of genetically engineered wheat. Sure enough, Rolf Penner's commentary in the National Post was again calling for this commercialization of G.E. wheat.

Now we did also mention on that broadcast, that Penner's Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association had invited Dennis Avery of the U.S. based Center for Global Food Issues to keynote their annual convention hosted back in January. Avery is known among a large subsection of the food and agricultural community as one of the most uninformed yet vocal figures on the subject of food and farming – and we suggested on that show

how dangerous it might be for such a large group of Canadian farmers to be receiving information from someone who, as was demonstrated on our April 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 episode, is as misinformed on food and farming as he is. Avery is also one of the more well-known climate change deniers, that is, he denies that mankind's actions are affecting the global climate. And sure enough, the danger of having invited Avery to speak at the Western Canadian Wheat Growers annual convention seems to have possibly manifested itself into Rolf Penner's August 19<sup>th</sup> commentary in the National Post. About halfway through his commentary, Penner writes this, "For those who, despite evidence to the contrary, are still convinced that mankind causes global warming, GM crops can play an important role in the reduction of CO2 dumping." So Rolf Penner does not believe in mankind's impact on the climate.

Deconstructing Dinner will be keeping a close eye on how the prospect of genetically engineered wheat develops and perhaps further examine whether the Canadian government chooses to listen to a farmer organization that does not believe that mankind is having an impact on the earth's climate.

### **soundbite**

*JS:* Now moving onto a grain project that is responding to the known and harmful impacts our food system is having on the planet, in early June 2009, Deconstructing Dinner toured throughout Ontario stopping in the cities of Kingston and Ottawa to deliver a Local Grain Revolution presentation. With the project and its coverage on the show having already inspired so many individuals and groups to seek out locally grown grains, it was hoped that the presentation might inspire others to do the same. Sure enough an enthusiastic group in Kingston was formed to explore the possibility of launching a Grain CSA in the Kingston-area and the process that they will likely go through will probably be similar to some of the dialogue and debates we're about to listen in on today.

To help introduce that dialogue, it's fitting to launch today's show with an audioclip of James Mackinnon and Alissa Smith, the authors of the 100-Mile Diet or as the book is titled in the United States, Plenty. James and Alissa are of course responsible for introducing and successfully launching the 100-Mile Diet craze across Canada and which has certainly spilled over into the United States and so it was rewarding that the Kootenay Grain CSA was mentioned as part of a recent lecture that the two authors delivered. The lecture was broadcast on May 31<sup>st</sup> on TV Ontario's Big Ideas, a popular television show and podcast.

*Announcer:* You're listening to Big Ideas. The only regularly scheduled television program in North America devoted to the art of the lecture and the importance of ideas and public life. It is broadcast on TVO every Saturday and Sunday at 4pm. For more information on our program go to our website at [tvo.org/bigideas](http://tvo.org/bigideas).

*Alissa Smith:* People are having ideas that we hadn't even thought of when we started. We did a speaking tour last year in the Kootenay region of British Columbia and that's in the southeastern corner in a very mountainous zone and they actually have grain

elevators, 100 years old that are standing empty there right now that we saw as we did this tour and we're pointing at them saying, there look at that, that's really neat. Again you can't find that locally grown wheat there and we did a talk at a local community library and everyone was saying, ya well it's true all those old grain elevators are standing empty and we don't have any wheat here anymore, we can't buy it, it's really sad. And then in the back, this farmer put up her hand and said, "actually, I grew tons of wheat this summer, it's sitting in my barn, I don't have any way to clean it or anybody to sell it to." So instantly everybody got really excited, they all stood up and took out their cheque books and they're like, we'll buy it, we'll buy you the machines so you can clean it. And in that moment of community, with people just coming together, they realized that they could really make a change in their community.

Since then they've had even more interesting ideas. They started a grain sort of co-op. It's called a CSA, community supported agriculture, where people pay a subscription fee in advance so that the farmers can start-up this crop. Particularly when you are starting a crop for the first time, it's a bit of an economic commitment for a farmer that's hard to make. So they got 180 people together, they all paid \$100 dollars, that's \$18 000 dollars, and that's a good start.

And the farmers who decided to participate in that, they started thinking more about the idea of food sustainability and they thought, well that's great that people in our local area are getting together to do this, let's see how much fossil fuel we can take out of this equation here. They thought, well let's put away our tractors, let's farm by horse, and that's what they did. And then at the end of the season there's a sailing association there, they have a very large lake, Kootenay Lake, and the sailors said, well we've got these boats here, we just sort of sail around for fun, why don't we sail the wheat to market from where it's grown? So that's what they did this October. It takes about a day. They shipped it from Creston where it was grown, all along the lake to Nelson, which is the largest town in the community, so almost no fossil fuels in that entire equation.

### **soundbite**

*Brenda Bruns:* And that's why it would be good if we could start to look at where this is going even today and so that we can start to plan a few years down the road. I mean, last year we started with not knowing anything. This year, this has been a pilot so we didn't know how it was going to work. It seems to have worked so now we can say, how big do we want to let this to get and how many years ahead do we want to try to forecast?

*JS:* That's Brenda Bruns, one of the co-founders of the Kootenay Grain CSA speaking at a meeting held in November 2008 not long after year one of the project wrapped up. Before that was a clip of Alissa Smith and James Mckinnon, authors of the 100-Mile Diet speaking on TV Ontario's Big Ideas. Following some of the grain being delivered to members via sailboat, the Kootenay Grain CSA had successfully grown, harvested and delivered a little over 80lbs of five varieties of grain to each of the CSA's 180 members and 1600lbs to one business. The November meeting of the CSA's steering committee that followed that first year was the first gathering held to discuss what worked and what

didn't work throughout that first year. Here's CSA co-founder Matt Lowe who chaired that meeting.

*Matt Lowe:* I talked to Brenda and we thought that a good way to start this meeting would be to talk about what did and didn't work for each and everybody here. Say what they need to say, don't hold back and that's how we can move forward for next year.

*Female Voice:* I really liked the farm tours that we did. I think that really helped to make us feel like we were part of the process. I think at the end, when we got our grain it would've been good if we could've given people, now perhaps you gave this out and I missed it, but information on how to prepare whole grains. I think most people don't really have a clue.

*Female Voice:* I've had so many people coming into the bookstore looking for, how do I bake bread, you know, what do I do with whole grains, and this is good. You know, I've had even men saying, my mother knew this or my father knew this, and why didn't I pay attention because now I don't know what to do with my whole grain, and the men are interested as well, how to cook with it.

*Matt Lowe:* I've thoroughly enjoyed this whole thing. It's been such a rewarding experience. Time wise it's been a lot of time so I'm keen about exploring that idea of getting someone to actually take this on in a paid capacity. If we're going to get bigger I don't know if I want to increase my amount of volunteer hours. I think it's been a wonderful success. It's certainly inspired a lot of people. I've really enjoyed working with all of you. I mean, this project wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for just the really special people that I think have come together and now we have created a model in this one year which is a model that I think that so many other parts of the world are really wanting. I think we could improve our lists and that's what I see a coordinator could do and certainly if we are going to expand we can improve our contact lists and so on. Contacting people hasn't been the easiest at times, some people haven't provided email addresses, some people don't have emails of course, some people have unlisted numbers now, so it would be great to have someone that could keep up with that stuff. And I think a really integral part of the CSA is a newsletter and that's something we talked about but we didn't have time to do. We really do need to educate people, I mean we were just talking about some of the issues but in order to maintain a solid market for the farmers we need to keep educating and we need to keep the buyers involved. So certainly that's the type of stuff that a coordinator does and I think as a project like this grows I think it really does beg a coordinator and then a bunch of committed volunteers still. There's lots of work.

*JS:* Now some of these topics of educating members and hiring a coordinator will be examined in greater detail later on the show and also as part of next week's broadcast, but that round of feedback also heard from the three farmers. Drew Gailius for one was very happy with the outcomes of year one, but he did raise a notable challenge that the farmers and CSA encountered, a challenge that certainly any other community wishing to launch a similar project should be well aware of.

*Drew Gailius:* I think it's a very good thing for farmers, I really do. I do believe this is a very good thing, because that is very true, just like Wayne said, for us to be able to grow something knowing we've sold it is a big thing. At a reasonable price, it's great. So that part of it I think is fantastic for farmers. The problem I see though, the problem I can see, is when we try to pool all of our farms into one, it gets logistically a problem. It's (*background, "I understand"*) you know, that is something which I don't know quite how to get around. A true CSA, I guess if we ran our own CSA, well we'd grow one acre and if that one acre got wiped out our shareholders would say, well sorry about your one acre but we knew that ahead of time. But when we pool, it sounds nice to pool everything and that's a nice thing, but how then do we make it work smoothly.

*JS:* This is Deconstructing Dinner. Now beyond the challenges of pooling the product of the three farms together as part of this community supported agriculture project, were the challenges faced by members and just how they might use the 80lbs of whole grains at home. While the November 2008 meeting was one to gauge whether the project should expand into year two, steering committee member Abra Brynne cautioned the group of this challenge.

*Abra Brynne:* I'm kind of feeling the need to be a little bit of the devil's advocate, simply because I've been trying to increase local production consumption for almost 20 years in this region. And it's certainly a very different time right now, with climate change and the 100-mile diet, but we know that there's a huge demand in the idea of the grains but we haven't yet seen how the consumers are going to handle these grains (*background, "that's true"*). We've already had people mention, that people don't really know what to do with a whole grain and few people have the ability to grind at home for themselves. There's no guarantee that the people that got 100lbs of grain this fall are gonna not be there next spring kind of going, what am I supposed to do with this again? So I think we need to wait and see a little bit. I mean obviously we've got a little time before planning anything again but consumers are pretty fickle because we're really, really used to ease.

*Matt Lowe:* So maybe in a couple months we can poll, email, or call the people?

*Abra Brynne:* I think it's essential that we go back to the shareholders and find out how it's really working for them.

*Brenda Bruns:* And in the mean time perhaps feed them as much information as we can about what to do.

*JS:* This challenge of educating CSA members on how to use the grains in the kitchen was responded to by farmer Joanne Gailius who offered classes in Creston on how to use the grains at home, while Lorraine Carlstrom of Nelson offered classes to members there and you might recall our last installment of this Local Grain Revolution series when we listened in on one of Lorraine's workshops.

And so fast-forwarding to January 2009, when the CSA steering committee met yet again, Joanne did share some of the feedback that she received from members at her January class offered in Creston.

*Joanne Gailius:* When I taught the course at the library there was 22 people there. Most of them hadn't opened a bag yet and that was about a month after it had been delivered. They were excited but almost no one had knowledge of using them before. And so over the last two weeks in anticipation of this meeting, I've been asking everyone who comes into my clinic or I just run into in town. Most, actually none have any expectation they will use all what they've received this year, within the year. So, that was interesting and even two that I know very well, and one is a really heavy baker, she does a lot of baking won't use hers and she has two children.

*Male Voice:* She doesn't have a grinder?

*Joanne Gailius:* No, she has a grinder, she uses that, she uses white flour still in a lot of the things she does and she won't use it. It was actually a bit of a surprise. But people are very happy with what they have, but going through the 81 or 83lbs, whatever we ended up with, is not happening in most places.

*JS:* Now when these challenges were brought to the table at the CSA's January meeting, an in-depth discussion ensued that followed-up on the suggestion to survey the membership and determine how they had fared thus far with their grains - a survey would also help the CSA better plan what to grow as part of the CSA's year two. Weighing in on the discussion were CSA farmers Drew Gailius and Keith Huscroft and CSA committee members Abra Brynne, Jeremy Lack, Wayne Harris, Brenda Bruns and Matt Lowe. The discussion evolved in a rather interesting way, as it was learned, that what CSA members want, needs to also be in line with a long-term plan of what crops work best on the three farms and what works as part of a healthy crop rotation that ideally would take place over a seven year period. Organic grain farming, after all, needs to more specifically take into consideration how the crops build soil fertility over time.

*Matt Lowe:* This sort of information is important but also it can potentially be opening a can of worms if we start to cater too much to everybody's individual preferences. Then we might as well be a commercial store. Ya, I think it's important to know how it's working for people but at the same time the simplicity of the CSA model I think is really important. Just like a vegetable CSA you get whatever (*background, "you get kale for 3 months"*). Ya, ya or you get 20lbs of potatoes and 1lb of carrots.

*Drew Gailius:* I agree with you Matt. I think also though that if we want to sell shares we have to cater to what people want as well. We walk a bit of a fine line there. Because we can change the varieties we grow, that's something that's quite easy to do. I think when we take a survey it just gives us a bit of an idea where maybe to head.

*Female Voice:* What about even asking, "what are your top three grains that you've used?"

*Drew Gailius:* That's important.

*Female Voice:* Because you know, I was thinking, just projecting down the road if we're getting a larger variety of grains grown, that a share wouldn't necessarily include that full range but there could be the core group. I know I go through way more hard wheat than I go through soft wheat so I could get a core selection of so many pounds of each and then I'd have an option to choose 2 more from 4 options or 5 options.

*Female Voice:* And as long as people selected far enough ahead of this growing season that the farmers could then adapt to grow enough of whatever is selected.

*Joanne Gailius:* It's the only way to keep it simple

*Matt Lowe:* I think one more thing to keep in mind is crop diversity, right? I know you guys have talked about that, the importance of not narrowing it too much so that we have that diversity that encourages resilience.

*Drew Gailius:* Maybe some of that, not to open another can of worms, maybe some of that, means that because we're small we wouldn't want to grow 7 different varieties. We might choose and to grow 4 different varieties. Other farmers would choose some others but to keep the different varieties going.

*Female Voice:* I think it's partly changing the thinking around how we acquire our food to deciding ahead of time what we are going to use or need and learning that. I don't think many people really think about how much of different things they use in the course of a year. And so, we're learning to pre-think that pre-order and take responsibility for our food at the front of a season rather than going to the store and expecting there to be a surplus there for us to select from.

*Female Voice:* But the issue is of course, the end user has to use the product. And so, like for me, I'm one of those convenience people so I just gave grain away to everybody in my circle and said, would you use this and if you would, how would you use it and if you like it are you going to buy a share next year? And what happened was some people started using it and really loved it and said, yes, I'm going to get a share next year. Other people said, I don't know how to grind or now they're online looking at should I buy a vitamixer and they are assessing grinders and then what sort of convenience is this and so, if we want people to change their lifestyle it's not an easy process, it hasn't been that easy for me. So we need to get, for example, if we are recommending that people are buying a particular product, we need to get that company online and get them pushing natural grains for us. We need to get them involved in what we are doing. I don't know how else people are going to learn how to change, I don't know how we do that.

*Jeremy Lack:* I think the focus seems a bit strange, the CSA exists to make the farmers have a living not whether the consumer gets exactly what they want. There's a sort of slightly wrong emphasis there (*background, "absolutely"*) because the CSA is not going



to exist without these guys, right? And if they're not happy with what they are doing, what they can make out of it, then it's finished.

*Male Voice:* We're going to be happy growing and getting paid adequately for what we grow. As long as we know what we're growing is appreciated or going to be used because if it isn't we'll grow something else. I mean we're not really growing a lot of varieties. What are we up to, a half a dozen or something? So if we switch 3 out and switch 3 different ones in, and I think we should be doing that or at least trying something new every year. Even if we never use it again or everybody stocks up on it, there's a lot of things we could probably grow an acre of that might be available for shareholders for 2, 3 or 4 years to store. I think we really have to keep it exciting and keep people interested and I think we have to keep trying different stuff.

*Jeremy Lack:* You have to make money.

*Male Voice:* Well ya. No that's part of it and we're not saying devote huge acres but I mean if it's a half acre or an acre. It's still something that we can see selling but it doesn't have to go every year.

*Male Voice:* One of the main attractions is to be organic and sustainable and in order for that to happen you really have to look pretty seriously at your rotation. I think in many cases you'll be looking at either 5 or 7 year rotations to do it properly and you'll probably need to incorporate some legumes in there, whether you harvest them or whether you plow them down. So that rotation is going to have to play into that as time goes on too or there's going to be issues with the sustainability of it right there.

*Female Voice:* You know, I used Roy's lentils, it took me awhile to pick through all the little things so I'm glad we are getting a gravity machine this year but I think that for a lot of people who may not know how to use a whole grain, lentils aren't quite so foreign. So I think actually including legumes as a share option would be a really good idea and it would help with our rotation.

*Male Voice:* It's good for both parties really.

*Female Voice:* Ya.

*Drew Gailius:* The reason I think we need some feedback is partly because this grain CSA isn't something that's been done. We don't really have a model to follow and so to know what we should be growing as far as grains because it's a totally different thing. Vegetables are one thing but grains, what people want, we really have to grow what people are going to use. That's what I think, even though I agree that we don't want to get everyone thinking that they're going to put in their order sort of idea. I still think it helps us to lean in the direction that is going to make it work in the long-term.

*JS:* Farmer Drew Gailius. On this part nine of The Local Grain Revolution series on Deconstructing Dinner, we're listening in on recordings from the discussions and debates

that are helping move this innovative local grain project into what is now nearing the end of its second year in operation. Today's episode is archived on our website at [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca) and posted under the August 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 episode. Past episodes of this series are also archived there.

Now as became clear among the discussions we listened in on in those previous segments, a survey of the CSA's members was recognized as a critical piece in helping determine how the project should evolve into its second year. Not long after the January 2009 meeting of the CSA steering committee an online survey was sent out to the membership and a surprising 118 members responded to the survey, certainly a sign of an eager and supportive membership.

And the results were quite interesting. Of the 118 members who responded to whether or not they were satisfied with the quality of the grain 70% said they were completely satisfied, 24% mostly satisfied and 6% were undecided.

Some of the comments that accompanied those responses were; members finding too many hulls in the oats, some found it difficult accessing a mill to grind the grains into flour, some members who tried sprouting the oats were unable to sprout them, and some members hadn't even yet tried the grains. There were, of course, many members who indicated that the flavour of the grains was exceptional.

Another question posed to members was on the "Preferred Size of the Share." While members expected to receive 100lbs of grains, they received a little over 80lbs come harvest. 35% of respondents were happy with the 80lbs, 40% would prefer 100lbs and 25% would prefer 160lbs. As a member myself, I ran out of all of my grains other than my oats about a month ago, and I would lean more towards the 160lbs for the coming year as it did require some getting used to having all of this grain in the house. Baking bread, pastries, rolling oats and making pasta is quite the lifestyle shift that I, and I know many members are still adjusting to.

Also questioned in the survey was the "Price per Share." Were members satisfied with the \$100 share price in the first year? 89% said it was appropriate, 9% thought it was too cheap, and 2% too expensive.

As for the grains the members had used the most at the time of the survey, the Hard Spring Wheat topped out the list, followed by Oats, Spelt, Red Fife Wheat, and at the end of the list Khorasan Wheat.

And perhaps the most important survey question of all was would you join next year, and of the 118 respondents, 115 said yes.

### **Musical Interlude "Farming" by Rootz Underground**

*Music well it's farming, Be careful what you're planting  
Make sure you plant soul food or else your soul's gonna be starving*

*Music well its farming, higher meditation  
Music feeds your structure, farming feeds the nation*

*Well instead of cash crops we need more one drops  
And instead of mansions we need more farm plots  
We don't want no blood money in a your death trap, it's a road block  
This roots rock reggae rhythm revolution don't stop*

*Here it is, I'm not a man who afraid to get my hands dirty  
Deep in the soil, Rastaman is so earthly  
Plant more seeds is just trees of beauty  
Nah push no war a just love a mi duty  
World leaders what are your priorities  
So many wars but none on world poverty  
So many hungry so many unhealthy  
Locked in this jungle concrete monstrosity*

*Music well it's farming, we plant and watch it grow well  
If you plant in love then, you're gonna never reap in sorrow  
Music well its farming, sometimes me mud up in a studio  
Sometimes me mud up on a stage show  
And now I "Ras Up" and stay so*

*Well instead of cash crops we need more one drops  
And instead of mansions we need some farm plots  
We don't want no blood money in a your death trap, it's a road block  
This ya roots rock reggae rhythm revolution won't stop*

*Matt Lowe:* Well, there's two things. I think just quickly we should talk about the possibility of this increasing three-fold to 600. That would be probably a combination of individual shareholders and business shareholders like, Au Soleil Levant.

*JS:* The Rootz Underground followed by the Kootenay Grain CSA's co-founder Matt Lowe, who was recorded proposing at the November 2008 meeting of the CSA steering committee that the project triple in size from 200 shares to 600 shares. On today's episode of Deconstructing Dinner, we're listening to recordings from the meetings that followed the successful first year of what was and is Canada's first community supported agriculture or CSA Project for Grain. Having delivered close to 20,000lbs of locally and organically grown grains to 180 families and one business in the Kootenay region of British Columbia, CSA steering committee members appeared eager to see the project triple in size as it continued into its second year of operation, that's this year.

The discussion that ensued, following Matt's proposal, was quite exciting as the steering committee began speaking of the many options available as to what other crops might be grown as part of the project. As an example of the possibilities, farmer Roy Lawrence, as we heard earlier, had already grown a test plot of lentils in year one that grew really well

and I can testify personally, also tasted great. CSA members received a small bag of the lentils along with their other grains. And the discussion of what to grow in year two even included a brief exchange on the prospect of cultivating hemp, which in a province known for its outdoor cultivation of cannabis and the inherent risks of cross pollination between the smokeable forms and the edible and wearable forms, it was quickly decided among the group that it might be better to pursue other crops instead.

*Matt Lowe:* Are you guys keen to see that happen because I really think it's possible. So it would go to 600 shares next year.

*Male Voice:* Ya, I kinda would like to get my share up to around 20 acres, what would that be? Probably 15 or 16 acres maybe in the CSA or maybe a little over 20 acres if we tried something else but I want to...*(background, Matt Lowe, "ya, I'm just thinking next year")* I got this one ton of Hard Red, I grew it, it wasn't organic seed and got a ton of it and I'm going to plant all of that. So I'm going to grow 20 acres of Hard Red Spring Wheat. I don't care if only 2 or 3 acres gets taken, it's just the fact that I've got it, I want to plant it. Some of it's going to be new ground so I don't know how it's gonna be. So I'm gonna do that but on top of that whatever you want to come up with.

*Matt Lowe:* Other folks?

*Male Voice:* I think we're willing to increase. It would be nice though to go away and think about it.

*Matt Lowe:* Definitely it's not today. We don't need to know today but just throw it out there if it seems like a possibility.

*Female Voice:* And Drew and Joanne, you can't by scale expand much as far as how much you grow but your involvement may grow if you're doing more of the cleaning and looking at some of the legumes and different...

Drew Gailius: That sounds good with us.

*Brenda Bruns:* So that does become the next question when we started to ask people what they'd like as part of their share. A number of people said oil crops so flax is an option or I guess hemp. I don't know what the implications are of growing a hemp crop here.

*Joanne Gailius:* I think it's supply management still isn't hemp, or by license, or what is it?

*Male Voice:* I think you have to be licensed. I think there may be issues with some of the other hemp growers *(background, laughter)* *(background, "I think Kenny ran into a problem with that didn't he?")*.

*Female Voice:* How do you address that? (*background, many voices talking at once, "there were issues with cross pollination"*). That's my question, did it cross pollinate and cause a problem? (*background, "ya it did"*). Okay, alright.

*Female Voice:* So we might be looking at flax. (*background, "for everybody that was up wind"*).

*Female Voice:* Okay, so it wasn't a problem for Kenny it was a problem for the pot growers. (*background, many voice talking at once, "Ya, and then they weren't happy," "Well what can they say?"*).

*Male Voice:* Well it's a large money industry (*background, "well ya," laughter*)

*Female Voice:* What is it, bigger than farming, mining and forestry all together? (*background, laughter*).

*Male Voice:* I think we should just forget about it all together.

*Brenda Bruns:* So we'd be looking at flax as a possibility and legumes, I had a lot of people say.

*Female Voice:* They're awesome

*Joanne Gailius:* I've got my 15 types of beans saved and we're planting half an acre.

*Male Voice:* So how do sunflower seeds do in this Valley?

*Female Voice:* That's another one that people have been asking about.

*Male Voice:* It's the coldest crop in the world to...I grew sunflowers one year and I think we combined them on about November 20<sup>th</sup>. I have a combine without a cab and I haven't been so cold in my life. It was cold really cold.

*Male Voice:* So it's a very long season crop?

*Male Voice:* Ya, and we had a lot of problems with birds that year. The birds probably took half the crop.

*Female Voice:* And how do you harvest it? (*background, Matt Lowe "it's good for the wildlife centre"*).

*Male Voice:* They are actually very easy to combine (*background, "oh good"*). You do need to modify the reel a bit because the way the flowers hook over they would hook on the back, that's the other thing about my combine, the thing would run out and flew up and hit me (*background, laughter*). It had its challenges (*background, laughter*). It was a very pretty crop though (*background, "ya!"*).

*Female Voice:* But if we're going to be at all serious about oil seeds they're even more challenging than grains in terms of making it edible for people.

*Male Voice:* I just bought flax oil from a guy, organic flax oil, he's near Highwood and his press is not very big. It's amazingly small.

*Matt Lowe:* It seems what needs to happen if someone has the time, certainly we could put it out there, for someone to do the research on the possibility of oils and small presses and so on. And I really liked what Roy did this year in growing the one acre of lentils and there's a few other crops that I have in mind too and I think it's a really nice way to experiment and introduce a crop into the CSA is by going small scale, you know. Just sample packs almost.

*Brenda Bruns:* But we want to make sure that Roy gets compensated for that because so far he has given. He's just paid for his own seed, he did all that work, he's given seed to all the shareholders so now I think the CSA maybe can take the role of marketing for Roy and the fact that he has this available. Please save me 10lbs (*laughter*).

*Matt Lowe:* I'd like to suggest that we put the lentils, add the lentils and another thought I had is we could have two different shares. We could have a grain share or more like a wheat/oat share along the lines of what we went with this year and then there's a few other crops that I'm curious about and the lentils I would like to see that be a part of the CSA next year. Quinoa is another one. Quinoa you get top dollar for that grain and it's really popular. It's one of the most complete foods from what I understand. It's a very nutritious food and one idea that I started just mulling around just yesterday actually, because we've got a young woman in our EcoSociety office who did some research. She researched if there are any machines that are being used to harvest Quinoa and she wasn't able to find any information on that. What she found was, where a lot of the Quinoa is grown in South America they actually do it by hand and it's quite easy to harvest by hand and to process. There's a little cover that comes off very easily and so one idea I wondered about next year was to grow small scale and whoever wanted a share of Quinoa they could come and actually do the harvesting and do their own processing and it would be a great way for people, for shareholders, to get involved. It seems like Quinoa really lends itself to that. It's actually being grown in Canada, in lots of backyard growing. It grows well here. She also did some research on rice. It seems to be too long a growing crop although wild rice is certainly something I want to talk about today. It's being grown in Saskatchewan commercially, wild rice.

*JS:* This is Deconstructing Dinner. Following that discussion a one-acre test plot of Quinoa was sourced from farmers in Peru and was then planted at Drew and Joanne Gailius's farm. Unfortunately a lot of the Quinoa did not germinate but to help support what did grow, in the early part of the summer I joined Matt Lowe and another CSA member on a day trip to Creston to help weed the one acre of Quinoa, because of the low germination rate will likely only be used as seed for next year.

Now with this plan to expand the grain CSA three-fold, some important issues were needing to be discussed, among them, the need to build more processing capacity to handle all of this grain. As CSA farmers and steering committee members discussed the need for processing capacity at that November 2008 meeting, farmer Drew Gailius expressed his interest to take on the task of processing the CSA's grains. After all, his farm is the smallest of the three and he has more time available to take on that processing role. The discussion also led into the future need to seek out or develop storage capacity as well.

Here's farmer Drew Gailius.

*Drew Gailius:* We also should have another machine. The fanning mill works great but the fanning mill doesn't do everything so we need more complex machinery.

*Male Voice:* They have these portable things that they haul around on trailers that are supposed to be good.

*Drew Gailius:* There's all kinds of stuff out there.

*Male voice:* I was talking to this guy who said, you can get a 40 foot trailer where the grain goes in one end and the sack flies out the other.

*Female voice:* How much does that cost?

*Male Voice:* They're \$40 000 or \$50 000 dollars for a complete unit.

*Drew Gailius:* At least, I just saw a couple on the internet for \$90 000.

*Male Voice:* Well there you go.

*Abra Brynne:* I do think the time is right for being able to get some serious grants though. Everybody's got environmental grants these days. It's worthwhile approaching it, there's been lots of buzz about this. So I think if we could frame the grant proposals as consolidating this initiative so that it's long-term sustainable and we can clearly develop it as a working model to be replicated elsewhere. There's a lot of agencies that would be interested in something like that.

*Drew Gailius:* What is the response on this? We've talked about putting in a proper cleaning spot so we've talked about it and have made steps toward doing that. I thought, well maybe too, maybe, there's funds that we can access or something, maybe the government could help or I don't know how that works but anyway. Well, we had talked but I thought well that's really up to everyone to decide if they would want to use that or if it's better the whole CSA wanted to set up their own system or any one of the other farmers wanted to set up a system, you know before we went ahead and said anything. That's where we stand, that's where we're coming from.

*Abra Brynne:* Has it been too long since there's been grain production in the Creston Valley that there's...are there still people around from the last time there was grain grown that would have the skills to take over cleaning? (*background, "well they wouldn't take over the cleaning"*)

*Female voice:* Jack doesn't have the equipment but he has the knowledge but what's his name, Neever?

*Male voice:* As far as the cleaning goes there used to be Pipers that did it.

*Female voice:* Yes, Christiansons, Eastmans (*background, "Eastmans still do"*). Mr. Mulligan had a cleaner

*Male voice:* He's still got one or whoever has that place.

*Female Voice:* Okay.

*Brenda Bruns:* And it doesn't have to be cooperatively shared. We're talking community, where we have a whole bunch of little businesses and we support each others business and you've got economic strength for the Valley. So, I like that model where we have little businesses springing up to meet the needs locally as we build a demand.

*Joanne Gailius:* Is the distance prohibitive for you guys? (*background, "pardon me?"*) Is the distance too far for you guys?

*Male voice:* Well it would be totally different if I just brought my grain and drop it off (*background, laughter*).

*Female voice:* That's a big smile.

*Female voice:* That's a cheeky smile.

*Drew Gailius:* My thinking is you grow the grain, you drop it off, then we clean it and we get so much for cleaning it. You know, we're not in this, by gosh, to make money but... (*background, laughter – many voices talking at once*). We've sort of been farming long enough to understand what it's like (*background, laughter*).

*Matt Lowe:* No, no, but that's what this is supposed to address. You guys are supposed to make some money (*background, many voices talking at once*).

*Male voice:* What Brenda said was right, what you're really trying to build here is local capacity. In this case local processing capacity and if one of the farmers is involved in that it's that much better because well it's just that much better in my mind. (*background, sounds of agreement*)



*Abra Brynne:* So, I've heard there's a fair bit of work for you involved in the cleaning. It could just be working out the kinks and the whole how you manage what and integrating it into your own farm activities if you are the one running it and providing that service for everybody. And I'd like people to think about whether the payment would be in monetary exchange or grain exchange, upping your grain quota on the farm so to speak. But it seems that you're really busy so I'm assuming there's only so much cleaning you could undertake in any one growing season.

*Drew Gailius:* Actually, because we don't grow that many number of acres we have time, while Roy is very busy. We're sort of slacked off because our farm is only 40 acres. (*background, many voices talking at once*). Just getting it all going, that really was awkward but now the system's been set up where it's basically turn on and go, because our grain cleaner will work, you don't need to be there the whole time. You can turn them on and I can go do other things.

*Male Voice:* The other thing is if the local market continues to grow you wouldn't necessarily want to deliver all the grain at the same time in the fall. You know you might be cleaning grain all winter long or your cleaning season might keep getting stretched further and further.

*Female Voice:* We'll be Dairy farming before you know it (*background, laughter*).

*Female Voice:* 24/7.

*Joanne Gailius:* Drew and I talked about that storage becomes an issue, halfway around our walk this morning.

*Brenda Bruns:* So I wonder if you need to find a place locally that the grain could be stored and distributed from, that may not be onsite, on your 40 acres.

*Joanne Gailius:* Well, and it really needs to be mouse proof and dry.

*Brenda Bruns:* Yes. But I'm sure that such places do exist in the Valley.

*JS:* This is Deconstructing Dinner – a syndicated weekly radio show and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman.

You're listening to recordings from meetings among the farmers and steering committee members of the Kootenay Grain CSA – Canada's first community supported agriculture project for grain now into its second year in the Creston Valley of British Columbia. These segments were recorded in November 2008 and January 2009 not long after year one of the project wrapped up and year two entered into its planning stages.

Similar to that last discussion on building the processing and storage capacity in the Valley to accommodate any future growth of the CSA, was a discussion on seed saving

and farming practices. While not certified organic, the CSA has committed to cultivating grains using organic principles, and with organic grain growing being new to at least one of the three farmers, CSA co-founder Matt Lowe suggested to the group that the CSA invite experts from outside of the region to share their knowledge on organic grain growing with farmers in the region. Here's a segment from that discussion.

*Male Voice:* So eventually you might want to try to get to the point where you've got more than one year of seed too.

*Brenda Bruns:* Oh, that's a neat idea.

*Male Voice:* In case you do have a crop failure. You don't want to take it and put it in a vault in Norway but you want to keep growing it out. To have more than one year would be a good idea.

*Matt Lowe:* You guys have all said that you would really like some organic farm knowledge to come into the community in terms of speakers to help increase your knowledge. We've talked about February, trying to make this happen in February. We'd have to raise some money to do that. That's in this proposal. I just wanted to get your guys' thoughts on what you envision this being.

*Joanne Gailius:* Steven Snider.

*Male Voice:* Ya, I was sitting here thinking about him, he has a lot of cleaning knowledge.

*Joanne Gailius:* And, his dad seems to be pretty involved too.

*Male Voice:* I look through the magazines or whatever I get. The farm periodicals are more into this biodynamic farming where it's more soil preparation that you put on and raw powders and you know composting and stuff like that so it would be nice if you had someone who...or a farmer whose doing that. If you had a good biodynamic farmer you know that was working that way, that's something that I'd be interested in.

*Male Voice:* The idea Matt is that you're going to open this up to other interested parties.

*Matt Lowe:* For sure, it's going to be advertised throughout the Columbia Basin if that's who we get as one of our funders. Especially for anybody, but I think especially directed toward farmers, any farmer.

*Drew Gailius:* I think for me personally, or for us, anything learning about crop rotations and green manures and cover crops and all those things. That's really valuable. Weed control, because there's a lot of information and talking to somebody who's used that and that's done it is valuable.

*Male Voice:* It's very important too, that the farmers that are involved in the CSA now are able to grow to where they want to be and be successful at it, because that will encourage other farmers to say, oh maybe I can grow without herbicides and make a living at it. There is still an awful lot of skepticism about growing organic.

*JS:* That discussion, which was recorded in November 2008, is what later led to a February 2009 visit by experienced organic grain farmer Steven Snider of Little Red Hen Mills - a 2080-acre certified organic farm near Camrose Alberta. Steven has been farming organically since 1986 and cultivates 1600 acres of crops, green manures and hay. His visit to help educate the CSA and other area farmers provides yet another example of the importance of launching local food projects as a way to enhance the capacity of a region to grow food using more sustainable farming methods.

These fascinating discussions that we've been listening to have taken place as part of the evolution of the Kootenay Grain CSA will continue into next week's episode when we'll also listen in on another grain workshop hosted by CSA member Lorraine Carlstrom and that one on the ins and outs of sprouting grain. Yet another interesting way to make whole grains more digestible and to allow our bodies to better access the nutrients found within whole grains. If you missed Lorraine's workshop on sourdough, that show has been archived on our website at [deconstructingdinner.ca](http://deconstructingdinner.ca) and posted under our Local Grain Revolution page.

And so as we near the end of today's broadcast, we'll leave you with another segment of recordings from the November 2008 and January 2009 meetings of the Grain CSA when the group discussed the opportunity to invite more businesses to become members. This topic will be discussed in greater detail on next week's episode and will certainly be one to explore further as this series progresses because the interest to invite more businesses to become members of this CSA really does introduce a similar yet new model - Retail Supported Agriculture (or RSA).

Here's Grain CSA co-founder Brenda Bruns.

*Brenda Bruns:* One thing that I would like to be able to do with some of that surplus, I kept wishing that we had a little bit of surplus, is to distribute small amounts to the bakeries and co-ops in the area.

*Matt Lowe:* Promotion. Good idea.

*Brenda Bruns:* And see if they would like to test it out. I know Uri wanted to test out here and wanted to have a line of local ingredient breads. I know the bakery up the lake wanted some and there's a bakery in Invermere that wants some and there's a Kaslo group, a co-op that wanted to be able to sell it. So maybe if we're looking toward supplying larger shares, which is more convenient for you guys anyway than a whole bunch of individual shares, that's the other piece about local eating, you know, if we can also supply a retailer so that people can go out and purchase their grain that's locally grown.

*Matt Lowe:* Okay, and so then the other thing is, is it okay if we bring in a couple more businesses onboard and then do a combination of individual and business shares in those 600? I think it's with the 75 percent model so we were doing 75 percent share to businesses but I would propose that we do the bulk of the shares to individuals. I don't think we'll have any problems selling 450 shares to individuals and the rest to businesses.

*Drew Gailius:* What was the price to the individual?

*Matt Lowe:* It was a \$1.00 a pound for individuals and then for businesses it was .75 a pound.

*Drew Gailius:* And this year it's going to be? Do we know that yet?

*Brenda Bruns:* We had said \$1.25. (*background, "yep"*).

*Drew Gailius:* And the businesses would go up to \$1.00?

*Jon Steinman:* If I could make a suggestion. I know Matt knows this, I'm a big supporter of bringing businesses onboard with this, mostly in part because I think, and we've been talking about this already that from a lifestyle perspective I don't think people are quite ready yet to have so much grain. I know for me trying to change my lifestyle has been tough. So I do support that and I think it would be good to try to limit how many shares go out to businesses and at the same time try to expand how many businesses can be brought onboard so that every business can somehow incorporate it into their marketing, so a small bakery for example in Balfour or a small bakery in Nelson can market now they're a part of the CSA. That can only help spread the message of the CSA but it gives their customers a taste of local grain instead of say, just picking the co-op or just picking Au Soleil Levant or the Kootenay Baker. Really, just spread it around and set it up so if the CSA decided to continue really focusing on businesses there'd be a lot more avenues opened up.

*Drew Gailius:* One issue to bring up on that I think is storage because we don't have any storage for this grain. Basically, I think as a farmer, I want to get rid of it.

*Matt Lowe:* I think if we sell it to them, we have to say you have to take it.

*Jon Steinman:* And I think too by bringing many more businesses onboard, you start to get them experiencing what it's like and what they would want in the future. So planting what crops should be grown and could be grown becomes a little more easy.

*Brenda Bruns:* And the beauty of grain is it doesn't go bad because I remember I bought 800lbs of garlic and by Christmas it had all frozen, so the guy, well lucky for me, gave me my money back but I could have been stuck, where with grain it's not going to.

*Male Voice:* I'm going to build some silos so if I had to keep, take or hold some back that wouldn't be a problem.

*JS:* And that wraps up today's episode of Deconstructing Dinner and part nine of our Local Grain Revolution series. With the project having inspired others to embark on similar initiatives, you can expect to learn more about these other projects on future episodes of the series as well.

Here's one last clip of farmer Keith Huscroft who farms using horses. He shares a rather funny exchange that he had with a neighbour that accurately captures the struggles so many farmers, big or small continue to have in trying to make a living growing food.

*Keith Huscroft:* Did I tell you about that one time I was out there playing with my horses and I had the mower hooked on my horses and they were a little agitated. I had them right beside the highway, my two horses. This huge tractor, with four or eight tires and this great big baler, like a big square baler in the back, four by one ton bales, come up, and here I am, I was down here and he's up there. And he stopped and I look at him and he looks at me and I know we're both thinking the same thing, you can't make a living farming with that. *(background, laughter)*

### **ending theme**

*JS:* And that was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly one hour radio show and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. 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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