



# SALT SPRING ISLAND FARMLAND TRUST

## Farmland Use and Rental Policies

Approved by the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society Board, March 20, 2013

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Governing Principles

B. Policy Framework

C. Policies

#### **A. Governing Principles**

The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society (SSIFTS) was formed as part of the implementation of the Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan ([www.plantofarm.org](http://www.plantofarm.org)). The SSIFTS subscribes to the vision set out in the Area Farm Plan, that Salt Spring Island becomes a place where agriculture is a strong, vital and productive part of the local economy and is carried out in a manner that promotes and protects a sustainable community.

The SSIFTS also subscribes to the key principles outlined in the Area Farm Plan that are intended to guide the manner in which this vision will be achieved:

1. Protection: support the protection and appropriate use of agricultural land on SSI;
2. Education: develop an understanding and appreciation for agriculture among island residents and visitors;
3. Stewardship: encourage appropriate and environmentally sensitive farm practices;
4. Cooperation: establish collaborative networks of support among farmers, and between farmers and the community;
5. Self-reliance: reduce dependence on imported food and other inputs; and

6. Transparency: ensure open and inclusive decision-making around issues involving agriculture.

## **B. Policy Framework**

The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society is a non-profit organization and has registered charitable status with the federal government. The Society's registered purposes are three-fold:

1. To promote agriculture on Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands by acquiring, managing and leasing land for farming.
2. To educate farmers and the public on benefits and practices of locally produced agriculture.
3. To develop and maintain community gardens on Salt Spring Island for the benefit of the community.

Within that broad framework, the following goals guide the SSIFTS' policies and activities:

1. To research environmentally and socially sustainable farming practices;
2. To educate for the purpose of ensuring that farmland is farmed in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner;
3. To acquire, preserve and manage farmland on Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands through donation, purchase or lease;
4. To arrange leasehold agreements with appropriate individuals and/or organizations to promote the preservation of farming and the agricultural use of SSIFTS property;
5. To raise money, acquire funds, accept bequests and other assistance through private donations and government funding programs to maintain and manage farmland property;
6. To advance community awareness and participation in support of long-term community food security for current and future generations;
7. To [promote] the agricultural priorities of the local community as outlined in the [Salt Spring Island] area farm plan; and
8. To do everything incidental and necessary to promote and attain the foregoing goals.

## **C. Policies**

The policies which follow apply to all the lands that the SSI Farmland Trust owns. More detailed policies that are specific to the nature and use of a particular property may be attached to individual pieces of land. The property-specific policies will not contradict or contravene anything in these broad policies.

### **1. General**



# SALT SPRING ISLAND FARMLAND TRUST

1.1 Land must be used in an agriculturally productive and sustainable manner that will enhance farming and food security on Salt Spring Island. Priority is given to agricultural activities and support services that can demonstrate this requirement.

1.2 Priority is given to the production of human food crops and livestock for the advancement of Salt Spring Island food security.

1.3 Recognised organic practices are strongly encouraged on all SSIFTS properties.

1.4 Land use priorities and sustainability will take precedence over profits.

1.5 The SSIFTS will collaborate with other agencies and organizations to ensure that land use policies are current with the general agricultural goals and standards in the community.

1.6 Each property will be assessed and a vision developed for its best use.

## **2. Farming Agreements**

2.1 An operating farm plan will be required for every rental agreement. The operating farm plan must be approved by the SSIFTS prior to approval of each rental agreement.

2.2 The agreed-upon operating farm plan may be amended with the approval of the SSIFTS.

2.3 Rental agreements will be reviewed at intervals that are stated in the agreement, with a view to renewing or terminating as per the conditions stated in the agreement.

2.4 The SSIFTS welcomes land uses that include innovative approaches, new or exploratory farming methods and new approaches to improving agriculture on Salt Spring.

2.5 The SSIFTS welcomes land uses that include or provide an educational component.

2.6 The SSIFTS may encourage renters to participate in mentoring and public education that the SSIFTS organizes or authorizes on SSIFTS-owned land.

## **3. Infrastructure Development**

3.1 Infrastructure on SSIFTS land will have broad community benefit and will support agricultural activities consistent with the Area Farm Plan.

3.2 Infrastructure will comply with all bylaws and, if applicable, Agriculture Land Reserve allowances.

3.3 The SSIFTS will assess and seek funding for infrastructure development that it deems a priority.

3.4 The SSIFTS may invest in infrastructure based on its organizational priorities and the availability of resources.

3.5 If the SSIFTS receives land that has existing infrastructure future uses will be assessed in accordance with these land use policies and the specific needs and attributes of the property.

3.6 Rental agreements will address the infrastructure that renters can develop and the disbursement of assets at the termination of the agreement.

3.7 All infrastructure constructed or installed by renters must meet structural guidelines established by the SSIFTS (see guidelines) and local government requirements.

3.8 The SSIFTS recognises the efficacy of housing on farmland that directly relates to the farming operation. Housing on specific SSIFTS properties will be governed by current zoning allowances and will respect covenants and agreements with donors.

#### **4. Farmer Qualifications**

4.1 The SSIFTS will assess rental applicants' qualifications on the merits of each one's stated skills and abilities to carry out her or his farm plan.

#### **5. Tenure**

5.1 It is the intent of the SSIFTS to provide long-term tenure wherever possible.

5.2 Each rental agreement will state the tenure specific to that agreement and the review and renewal terms.

5.3 Tenure for tertiary farm uses of SSIFTS land and facilities will be based on conditions specific to the activity.



# SALT SPRING ISLAND FARMLAND TRUST

## **6. Farming and Operating Practices**

6.1 Farmers are encouraged to adopt sustainability principles. Preference will be given to farm plans that outline recognised organic practices in the plan. Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) and the BC Certified Organic Regional Program are an accepted point of reference.

6.2 In the case of a processing facility, it will be expected that accommodation will be made in practices and other ways to ensure that when certified organic produce and products come into the facility their organic status is maintained.

6.3 All practices will be monitored in conjunction with rental agreement compliance.

6.4 It is important that all reasonable care be taken to ensure that the practices used by one farmer not intrude or have a negative impact upon other farms that are sharing SSIFTS farmland.

6.5 Water use must be sustainable based on supply and each farm plan must include a water use component.

## **7. Rental Rates and Fees**

7.1 Rental rates and fees will be based upon cost recovery related to both the SSIFTS' operating costs and cost of maintaining the property at the full value of the assets.

7.2 Variables that will affect rental rates are: the type and value of the infrastructure that is provided by the SSIFTS; the quality of the land and its expected productivity; the improvements that the renter is proposing or has made; other related factors.

## **8. Labour Practices**

8.1 The SSIFTS respects labour codes and requirements and best practices having to do with hours of work, wages, and work site safety and protection.

8.2 The SSIFTS supports apprenticeship and mentoring initiatives that assist new and aspiring farmers.

SSI FARMLAND TRUST SOCIETY 5 March 20, 2013