



# Engagement Summary

Metchosin Agricultural Area Plan

*April 2024*

**Prepared for:**

District of Metchosin

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## 1.0 Introduction

In September 2023, the District of Metchosin, in partnership with the Metchosin Agricultural Advisory Select Committee, embarked on the creation of an Agricultural Plan. The Agricultural Plan will serve as a guide to local government and agri-food sector stakeholders in making decisions and implementing projects which are relevant to the agriculture sector. In order to develop a robust and feasible plan which is grounded in the present-day realities of agriculture in Metchosin, comprehensive engagement with local agri-food stakeholders and the broader community was necessary. Engagement activities began in late October of 2023, and continued until February of 2024. The following document describes the objectives, methods and findings from the engagement process.

## 2.0 Engagement Objectives

The project process required comprehensive engagement with key players and stakeholders who are involved in the agriculture sector in Metchosin. Engagement activities provided an opportunity to understand the local context, including pressing issues and emerging opportunities. The following goals helped guide public engagement activities in Metchosin:

- Inform: To provide balanced and objective information to assist the community in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions facing the agriculture sector;
- Consult: To obtain feedback and input from the community on analysis, alternatives, and/or decision through the project process;
- Involve: to work closely with the community throughout the planning process to ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered; and
- Collaborate: To work with stakeholders throughout the planning process on each aspect of the project to find common ground and identify preferred solutions.

The engagement process sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Engage the community in identifying existing food and agriculture assets, gaps, challenges, and opportunities.
- Notify members of the community on ways to become involved in the creation of the plan.
- Inform the development of the Agricultural Plan, which will provide elected officials with a clear, rational set of recommendations for decision-making.
- Gain support and acceptance across Metchosin for the Agricultural Plan and its implementation.

## 3.0 Engagement Methods

A variety of engagement methods were used to ensure meaningful feedback over the fall and winter of 2023 into 2024.

Engagement activities included:

- Fifteen (15) Stakeholder Interviews;
- A Community Survey for the general public (298 responses);
- An Agri-Food Sector Survey for the agricultural community (76 responses); and

- An Open House at Bilston Creek Farm on February 16, 2024.
- Three meetings with the Agricultural Advisory Steering Committee.

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the findings from these engagement activities.

## 4.0 Engagement Findings

### 4.1 Stakeholder Interviews

In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the agriculture sector, including the challenges and opportunities faced by farmers, a series of stakeholder interviews were conducted with farmers and business owners in Metchosin. Interviews occurred between November 6<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> of 2023. Invitations for interviews were sent to 20 stakeholders in Metchosin, and a total of 15 interview invitations were accepted. Interviewees included farmers across the spectrum of production, owners of farmland who lease to farmers, as well as representatives from Metchosin Meats, the Island Flower Growers Cooperative, Metchosin Farmers Market, and the Local Food Box. The findings from the interviews are summarized as follows:

#### 4.1.1 Top Challenges Faced by Producers in Metchosin

During interviews, several challenges that impact agricultural production were raised by producers. Identifying these key challenges can help guide the creation of recommendations that target opportunities to improve existing conditions. The identified challenges are listed in the following table with a tally of the number of mentions each challenge received.

*Table 1. Top Challenges in the Metchosin agriculture sector and the number of interviews in which it was mentioned.*

Challenge	# of mentions
Access and affordability of farmland	8
Limited resources (extension, inputs, tools, resources)	8
Effectively marketing to customers	7
Loss of farmland/ farmland conversion	5
Farm worker housing	5
Finding farm labour	4
Cost of inputs/ profitability	4
Access and affordability of water	3
Conflicts with non-farming neighbours	3
Wildlife conflicts	2
Climate change	2

#### 4.1.2 Key Themes

Throughout the interviews, 6 themes arose which help to deepen the understanding of agriculture in Metchosin, highlighting innovative efforts, and underscoring opportunities for growth and improvement in the sector, and delving into the challenges faced by producers. The following section explores each of the 6 themes identified, the themes are not listed in any particular order.

##### *Theme 1: There is a growing and significant local market for Metchosin agricultural products.*

Metchosin is uniquely positioned close to urban markets of potential customers, within a 5-20 minute drive of a new development in Royal Bay and the existing communities of Colwood, Langford and Sooke. Getting locally grown produce into the hands of these potential customers could improve with strategic marketing, and improved availability of food items. An informal survey of market attendees showed that many people shopping at the Metchosin Farmers Market were attending from these surrounding communities, however there are few farm vendors present at the market, with most stalls selling crafts and non-farmed goods. There is a hesitancy on the behalf of many farmers to sell at the market, due to the time commitment involved in preparation, and risk of having a slow sales day.

##### *Theme 2: There is an opportunity to position Metchosin as an agritourism destination.*

Some farms in Metchosin are already focusing on agritourism as a means to bring locals to their businesses, but more opportunities exist. An increasing awareness and appreciation for local foods, small-scale agriculture, as well as an abundance of cruise ships arriving at the Victoria Cruise Ship Terminal during summer months can provide an opportunity for tourists seeking agricultural experiences. Bringing people to Metchosin to visit farms may require targeted advertising campaigns, offering experiences in addition to products, and/or collaboration from local farmers and businesses such as a long table dinner or seasonal fall fair.

##### *Theme 3: Metchosin producers are keen to collaborate and support each other.*

The community of agricultural producers in Metchosin is small and familiar, with many producers already collaborating on sales methods such as the Local Food Box and the Metchosin Grown Map. Many producers mentioned that they would like to collaborate further. Some recommendations which arose during interviews included:

- Equipment co-operatives or tool libraries,
- Joining the Vancouver Island Direct Farm Market Association,
- Running Agri-tourism campaigns,
- Cooperative bulk agricultural input purchasing, and
- Securing value-added services or resources.

##### *Theme 4: There is a need to protect farmland for farming in Metchosin.*

Interviewees noted that it has been observed that Metchosin is experiencing an increase in estate acreages which are non-productive, or minimally productive (to receive farm tax status). It is felt that this activity is leading to speculation and is driving up the cost of farmland in Metchosin. With the current cost of farmland in Metchosin, it is unreasonable to expect to cover the mortgages associated with farmland purchase

through agricultural production alone, which could be reducing the attraction of buying land for farming. Leasing is a more affordable option but can be difficult to secure for newcomers or new entrants, as well as reducing land security for producers who do lease. Land matching programs have proven helpful for some producers and land holders, but there is opportunity to increase the presence of land matching initiatives in Metchosin, including collaborating with landholders outside of the agriculture community (estate acreages) to bring these lands back into production. Producers feel that more could be done to discourage non-farm use of farmland such as:

- Enforcement of fill regulations,
- Bylaws that dictate placement of housing on farmland through residential home plate criteria, so as to avoid building houses in the middle of a farmable lot, and
- Education around the value of farmland and importance of its use for farming.

*Theme 5: There is a desire to improve the availability of extension services and value-added resources.*

Producers noted that while resources such as Metchosin Meats, Tractor Time and Nootka Rose Mill are critical elements of the agriculture sector in Metchosin, there is need for additional resources and services to serve the agricultural community. Some producers had experienced difficulty in securing assistance through AF's regional agrologists, as expertise in organic vegetable production, herb production or floral production are lacking. Processing resources such as a commercial kitchen or juice press are also missing from the community, with producers in need of these resources travelling to Victoria or Saanich to access them. Producers are also finding it difficult to secure inputs such as organic compost locally, as well as straw for bedding and mulch. Furthermore, the Metchosin Meats facility requires significant upgrades as well as a reliable succession plan to remain operational in the future.

*Theme 6: Metchosin producers are contending with a number of threats to farm business viability.*

In order for farm business to remain viable, there are a number of financial factors which must align. One such factor local producers are struggling with is the limited availability and high cost of housing for farm workers and farm operators, causing some people to live elsewhere and commute into their farms. Additional financial burdens include the cost of inputs such as compost, straw, seed and water which are increasing every year and causing strain on producers profit margins. In addition to financial strains, producers are experiencing environmental pressures such as water security, which is becoming a concern with the changing climate and Aquifer 606 beginning to show signs of being over-drawn (anecdotally), with some user's wells drying up. Concerns around hydrological impacts on aquifers by the new development in Royal Bay were also raised. Furthermore, predatory animals such as cougars and bears prey on livestock, government response to this predation is slow and resource intensive. Resident geese are also frequently eating field crops and are costing farmers thousands of dollars per year.

## **4.2 Community Survey**

The community survey was available online through Survey Monkey between November 25<sup>th</sup> - December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The purpose of the survey was to get a better understanding of the support for Metchosin farms, local purchasing patterns, and opportunities to further connect with potential customers. The survey

received 298 responses, 83% of which live full time in Metchosin, and other respondents who live in Colwood, Langford, Victoria, and Sooke.

#### 4.2.1 Local Food Purchasing Habits

Most respondents were active purveyors of local foods, either purchasing directly from farms, shopping at the Metchosin farmers market, or seeking out local products from grocery stores (Figure 1). Of those who selected “other” responses included: lease land to a farmer, grow my own food, and friend with Metchosin farmers.

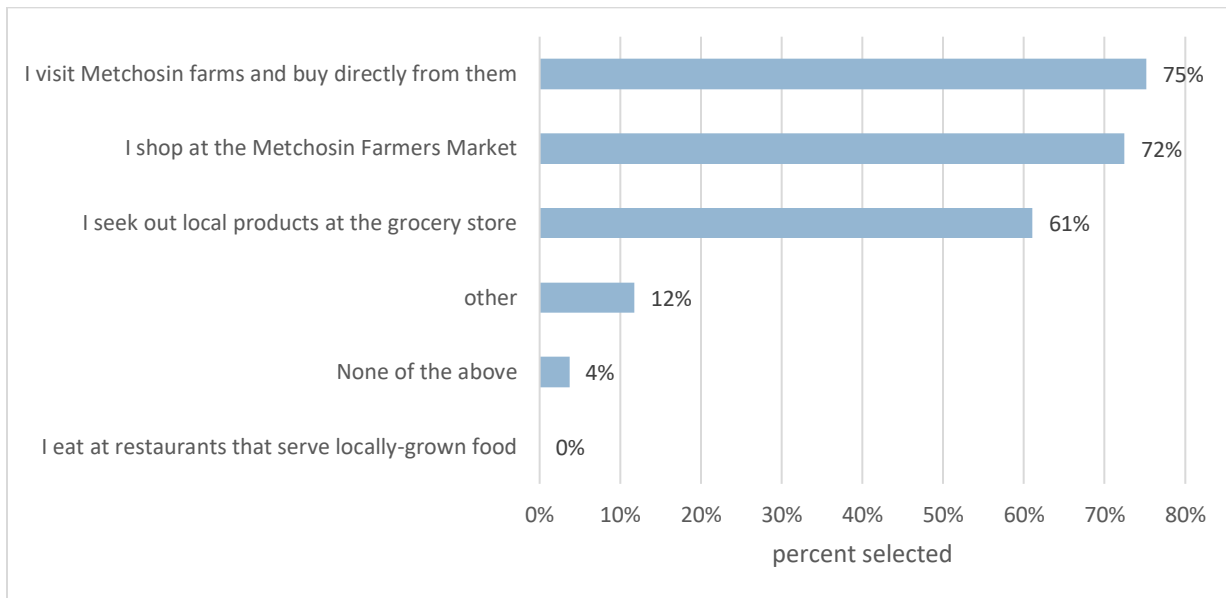


Figure 1. Respondent's relationship to the local agri-food sector.

When asked how frequently they purchased locally produced foods, 281 responses were received, half of which indicated that they often purchase locally produced food, 34% indicated that they sometimes do (Figure 2).

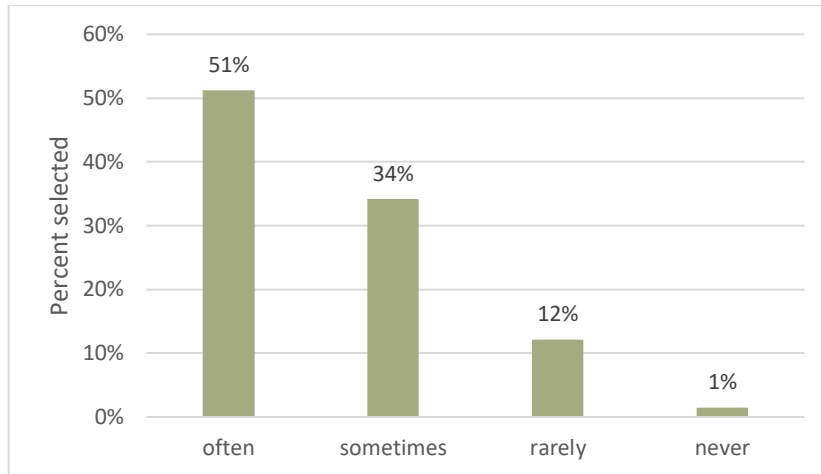


Figure 2. How often are respondents purchasing locally produced foods?

Respondents were then asked what would encourage them to purchase more locally produced food. Of the 270 responses received, the most common response was increased convenience, followed by affordability, and information to help them locate local foods. Of those who selected “other”, responses included increased presence of farm stands, a year-round farmers market, and more opportunities for celebration of local foods.

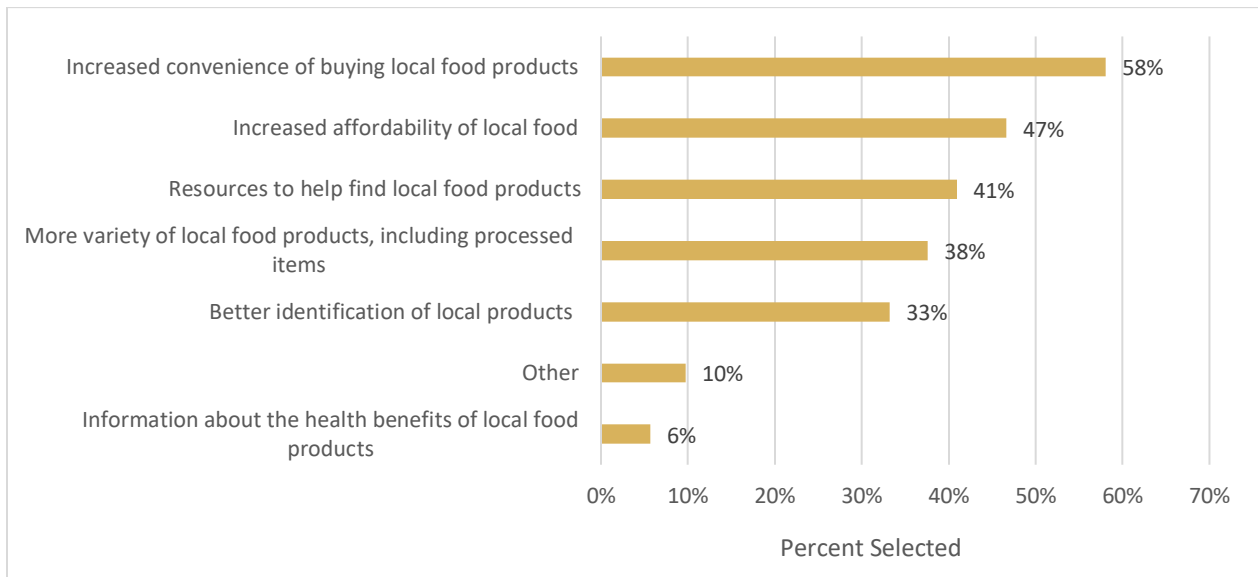


Figure 3. What would encourage respondents to purchase more locally produced foods?

#### 4.2.2 Relationship to Agriculture

Respondents were asked what benefits they experienced living in an agricultural area. 277 individuals responded, identifying many things they enjoyed about living near farmland including access to fresh produce and local foods, contributing to the local economy, and placing limitations on urban sprawl (Figure 4). Of those who selected “other”, responses included having the ability to teach kids where food comes



from, the preservation of traditional knowledge, health benefits, quality of life and getting to know farmers. Only 7% of respondents felt there were negative impacts about living near farmland, the majority of which were attributed to nuisance complaints such as odour and noise.

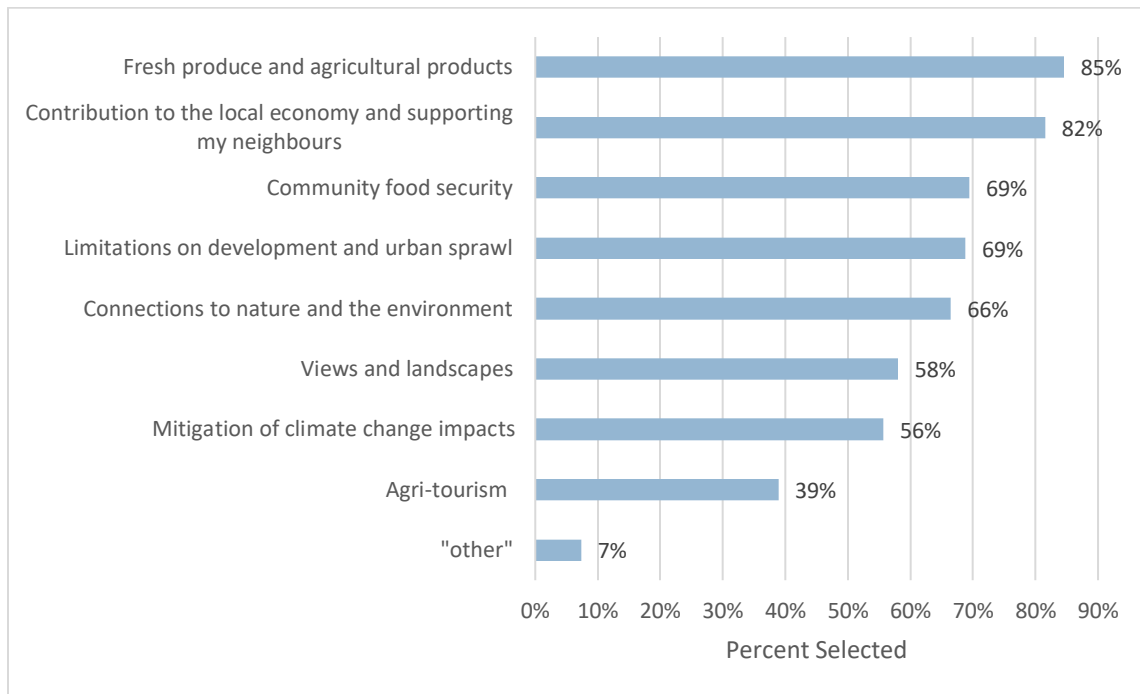


Figure 4. What benefits of living near farmland are respondents experiencing?

When asked what type of agricultural activities they were interested in participating in, 274 individuals responded and overwhelmingly indicated experiences related to buying food, including purchasing directly from farms, farm-to-table dining experiences and visiting local wineries, breweries or cideries (Figure 5). Of the 5% who selected “other”, responses included: connecting those with land to those in need of land (farmland with farmers), advocating on behalf of farmers, encouraging people to grow their own food, and incorporating Indigenous knowledge.

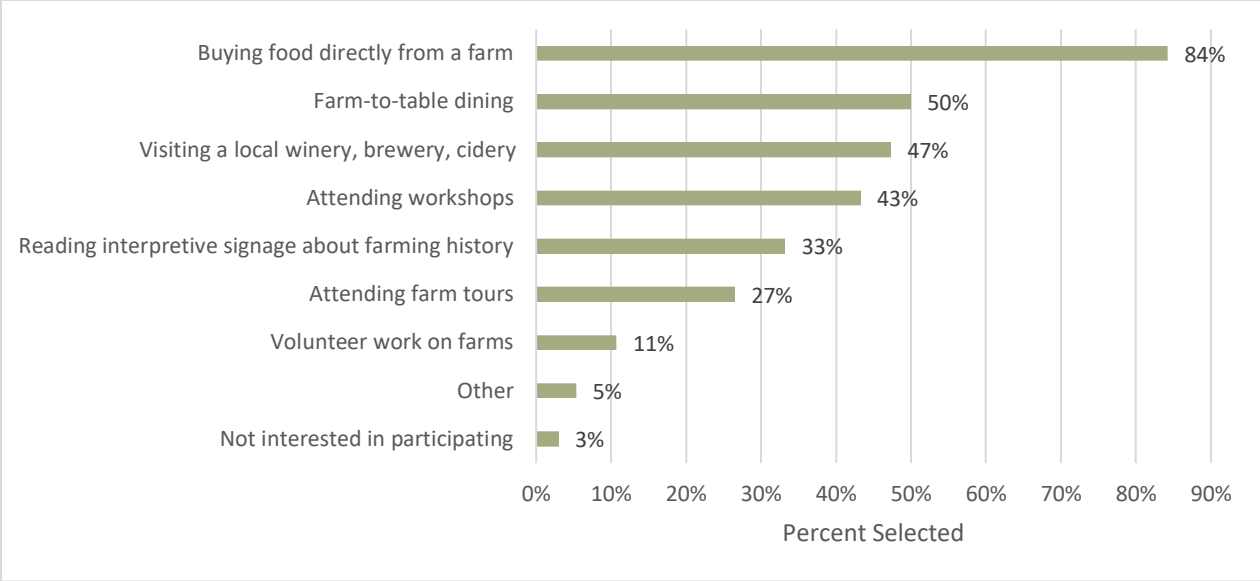


Figure 5. What farm activities are respondents interested in?

### 4.2.3 Looking Forward

When asked their opinion on how the District of Metchosin could best support agriculture, 255 individuals responded. A majority of responses pointed to the District being proactive about protecting farmland. There was also strong favour for supporting food system infrastructure through policies and zoning (Figure 6). Of the 8% who selected “other”, responses included: align with the climate action plan, support land matching initiatives, ensure adequate water access for farms, and protecting farmland for farming.

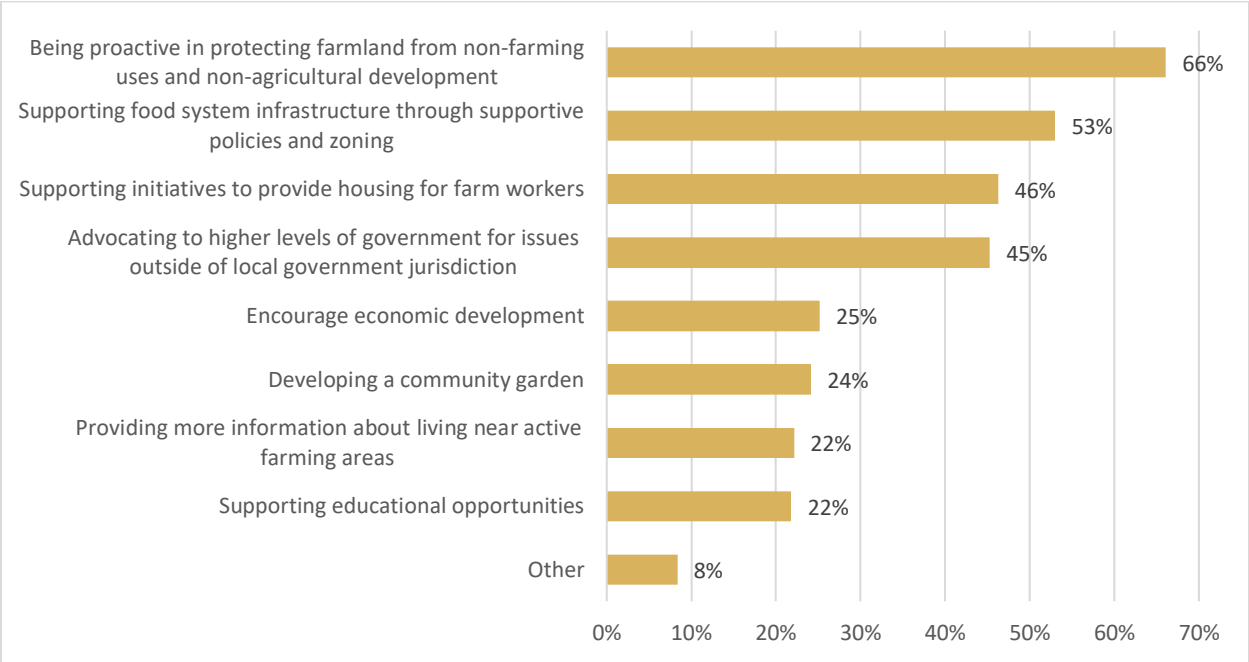


Figure 6. How can the District of Metchosin best support agriculture?

Respondents were asked to describe their ideal vision for agriculture in Metchosin in 10 years. 183 individuals responded, and the answers varied but tended to follow common supportive threads. The responses were summarized into the following themes:

- Continuation of existing farms and increase in new farms across Metchosin.
- Increased support and opportunities for young farmers including land matching, mentorship and business coaching.
- Adoption of regenerative production methods to make Metchosin agriculture more resilient to the effects of climate change.
- The ability to purchase more local produce via a year-round farmers market, more farm stands or a local grocery store.
- Improved housing opportunities and costs for farm workers and farm managers.
- Increased production of fruits and vegetables, and more diversified production.
- Metchosin is known as a destination for local food, agritourism and rural experiences.
- farmers making an adequate income, and farming as a financially viable business.

The final question in the survey allowed respondents to provide any additional feedback pertaining to the agriculture plan. Responses included:

- Support for the plan,
- Desire to see Metchosin remain rural and not succumb to urban development,
- Re-imagine how the Farmers Market space can be utilized and by whom to allow more opportunity for local produce to be sold into the community,
- Investigate opportunities to increase land leasing, agricultural land trusts, and land cooperatives, to keep farmland in production,
- Track annual farming statistics to use as an indicator of the status of the sector,
- Concerns that agri-tourism would hinder food production,
- Concerns around addressing climate change, and suggestions to align the Agricultural Plan with the Climate Action Plan,
- Support for agriculture and the preservation of agricultural land for farming,
- Financial compensation for farmers for damage and loss to wildlife conflict,
- Support for establishing a “Metchosin Grown” brand,
- Interest in seeing an agricultural coordinator role established with the District,
- Include native and wild foods harvesting opportunities,
- Recognition of farming in Metchosin as critical to local food security, and
- Protect surface water and groundwater resources .

### 4.3 Agri-Food Sector Survey

The agri-food sector survey was available online through Survey Monkey, as well as in paper form at the District office between November 25<sup>th</sup> - December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The purpose of the survey was to obtain a more detailed level of input regarding challenges and opportunities related to farming in Metchosin from a wide variety of producers in the community. In this respect, respondents were able to self-define themselves as farmers. The survey received 76 responses. 91% of respondents live in Metchosin full time, 1% live in Metchosin part time, and 8% were from elsewhere. Of those not living in Metchosin, respondents were living in Colwood, Victoria and Sooke.

#### 4.3.1 Farm Tenure

Respondents were asked about their relationship to the agri-food sector, 73 individuals responded, most of which own their farmland and farm it themselves (Figure 7). Some respondents (7%) were landowners who lease their land to farmers, and 3% own farmland that is not being farmed. Of the large number (26%) who selected “other”, responses included: hobby farming, people who would like to start a farm, clients of the abattoir, people who provide services to the agriculture sector in Metchosin, and retired farmers. There were no farm workers who completed the survey.

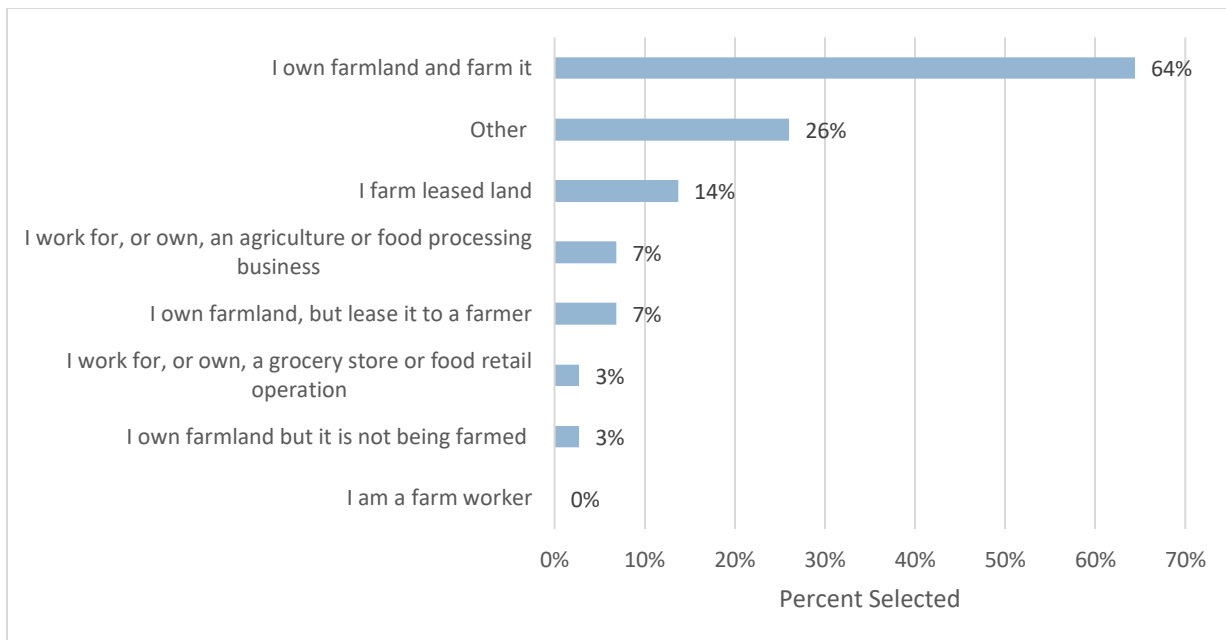


Figure 7. Respondent's connection to agriculture in Metchosin.

When asked how long they had been farming, 73 individuals responded, many of which have been farming for over 20 years, only 10% have been farming for under 10 years (Figure 8). of those who selected “other” the answers were over 40 years.

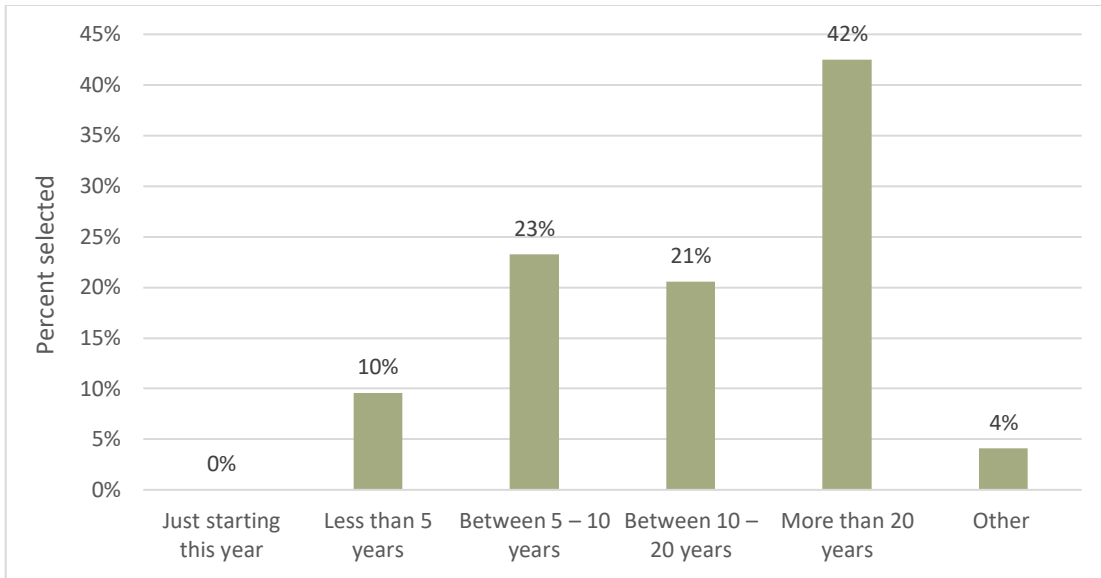


Figure 8. How long have respondents been farming in Metchosin?

73 respondents shared their age range, the most common age group of farmers in Metchosin is 61-70 years (32%), however a further 32% of farmers are between 31-50 (Figure 9).

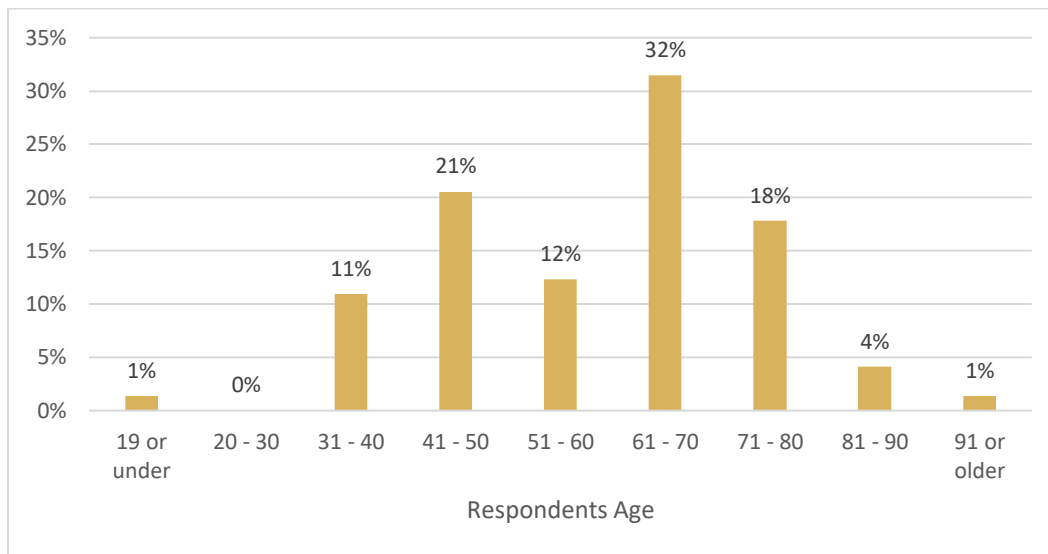


Figure 9. Age distribution of farmers in Metchosin.

When asked how long they planned to continue farming, 63 individuals responded, the most common answer was 10-20 years. Few indicated less than one year (Figure 10). Farmers were also asked if they had a succession plan for their farms, 66% indicated that they did not, only 17% indicated that they had some sort of succession plan developed (Figure 11). Of those who answered “other” the respondents said they intended to leave their land to their kids.

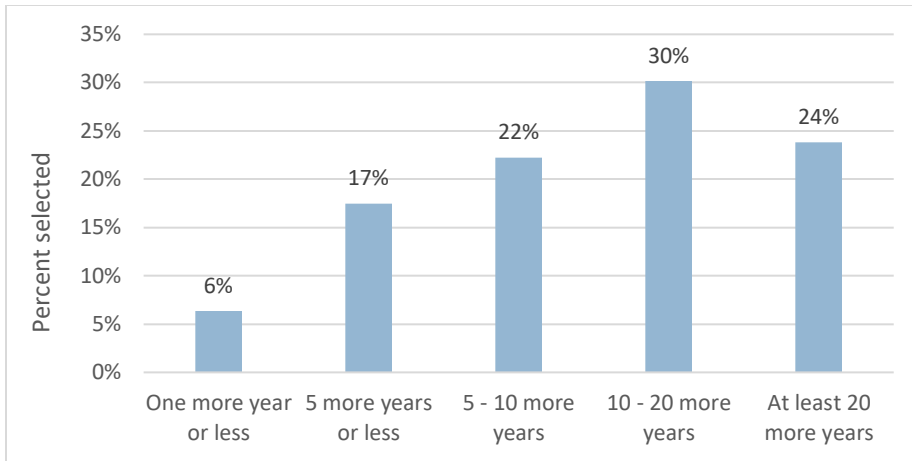


Figure 10. How many more years Metchosin farmers plan to continue farming.

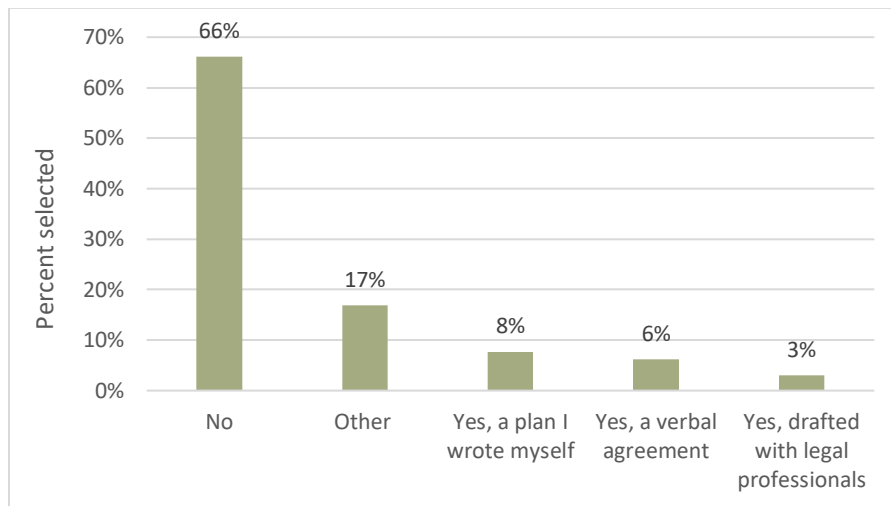


Figure 11. Succession plans for Metchosin farms.

#### 4.3.2 Farm Products

Respondents were asked to indicate all agri-food products that they produce on their farms, 74 individuals responded. The most common crop produced was field vegetables, followed by tree fruits and chicken eggs (Figure 12). Of those who selected “Other” responses included: wool, taxes, aquaponics, seed production, and natural decorations.

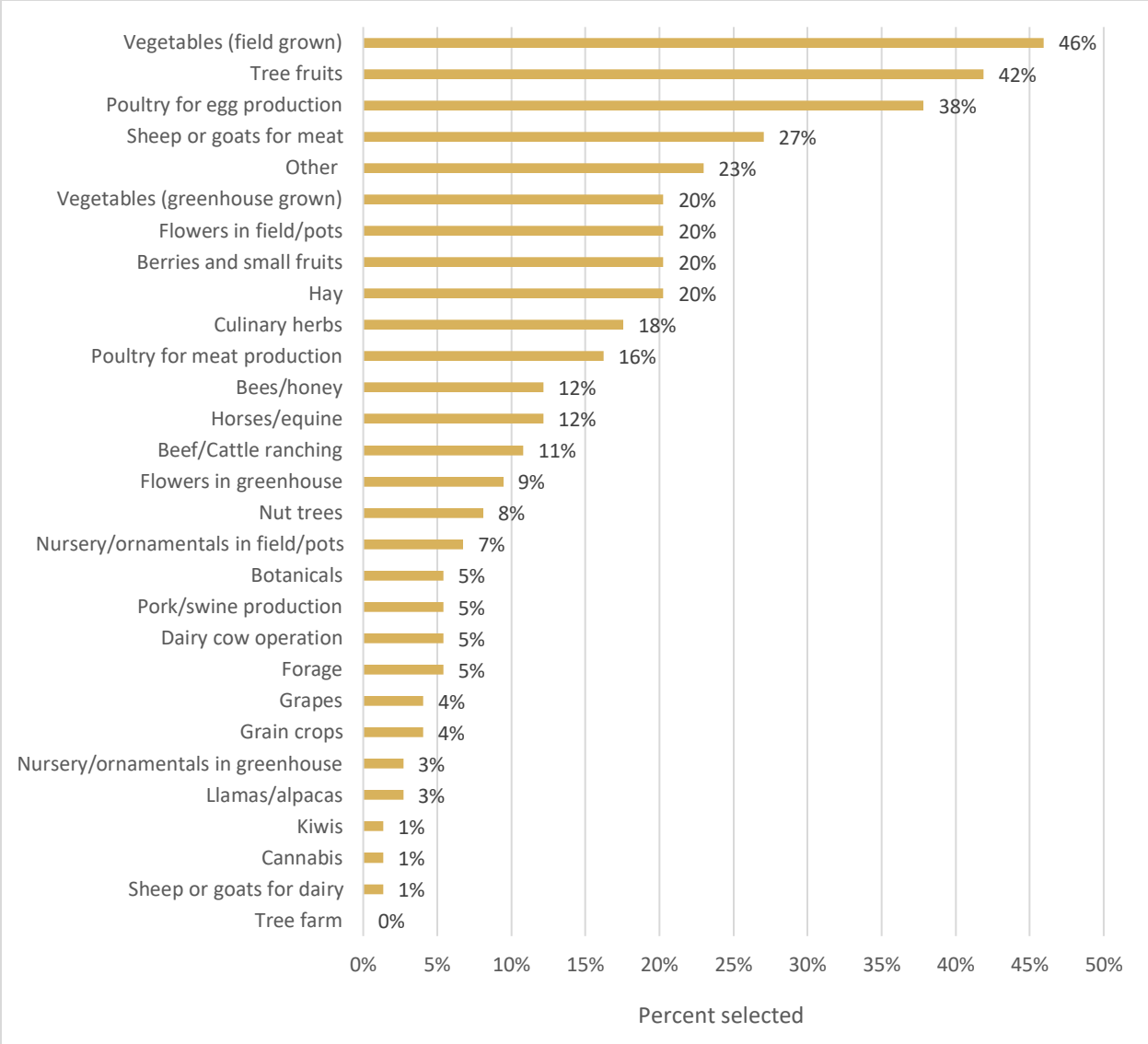


Figure 12. What is being produced in Metchosin?

Farmers were asked if they were involved in farm product processing to create value added products, as covered in the ALC Policy L-01. 72 individuals responded, most of them (60%) indicated that they were not, though nearly 1/3 indicated that they process their products themselves (Figure 13).

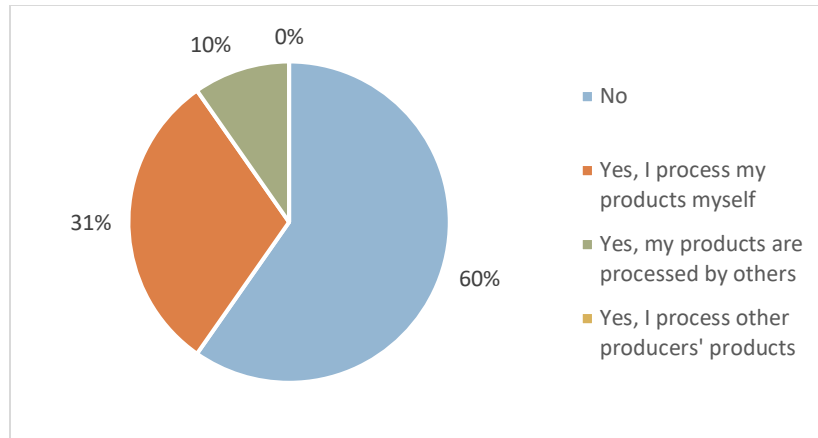


Figure 13. Adoption of farm product processing to create value added products.

Those who selected a variation of yes were asked what percentage of their product is processed into value added products, the responses were well distributed across the spectrum. The most common answer was 1-9%.

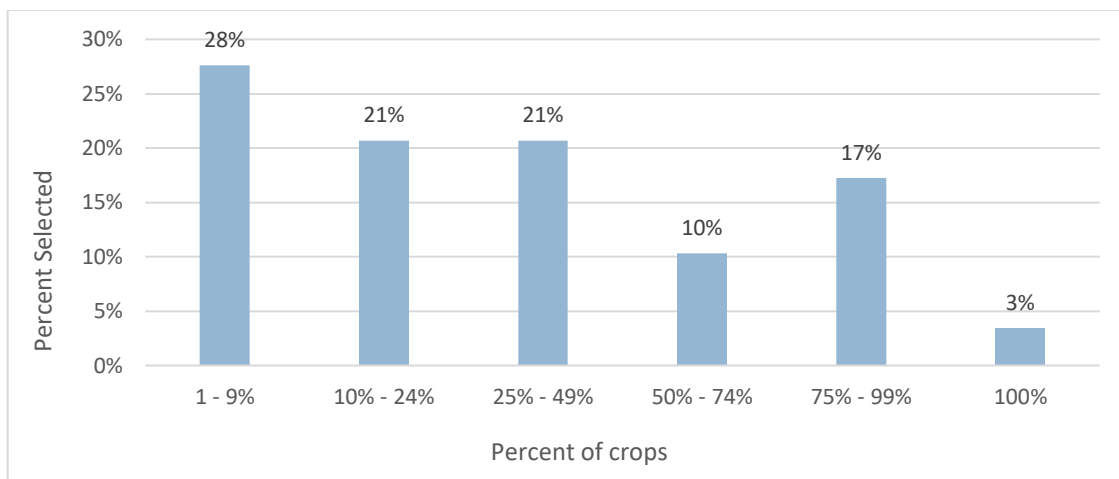


Figure 14. Percentage of product processed into value added items.

#### 4.3.3 Product Sales

Farmers were asked what routes they use to sell their products, 65 individuals responded and indicated that most product sales are occurring through farmstands and direct-to-customer delivery. Additionally, 1/3 are selling to restaurants, and 1/4 are utilizing wholesale pathways. Only 5% of farmers reported hosting agritourism events or tours (Figure 15). Of those who selected “other” responses included online (e.g. Facebook Marketplace), family and gifting.



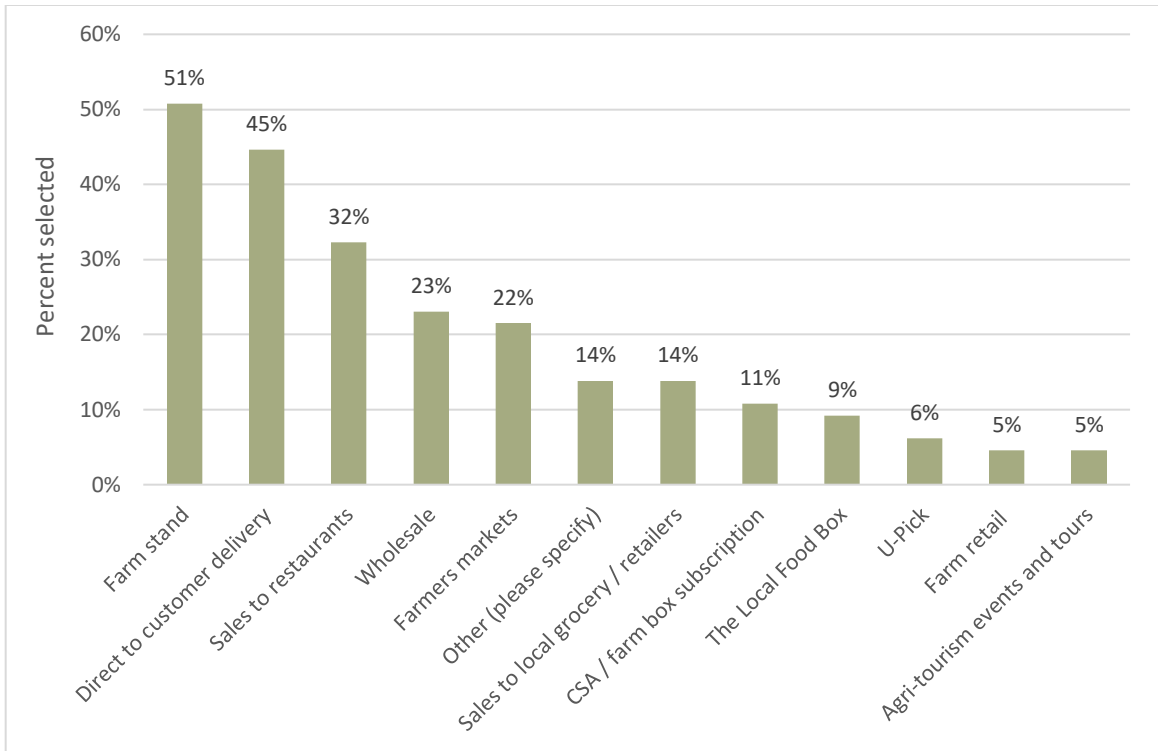


Figure 15. How farmers are getting their product to customers

Respondents were asked to estimate the annual gross income of their farm business, and 64 individuals responded. Of those 64 responses, 56% reported that they are grossing under \$10,000 annually. Of those who selected “other” responses included “nothing” and “sustenance”.

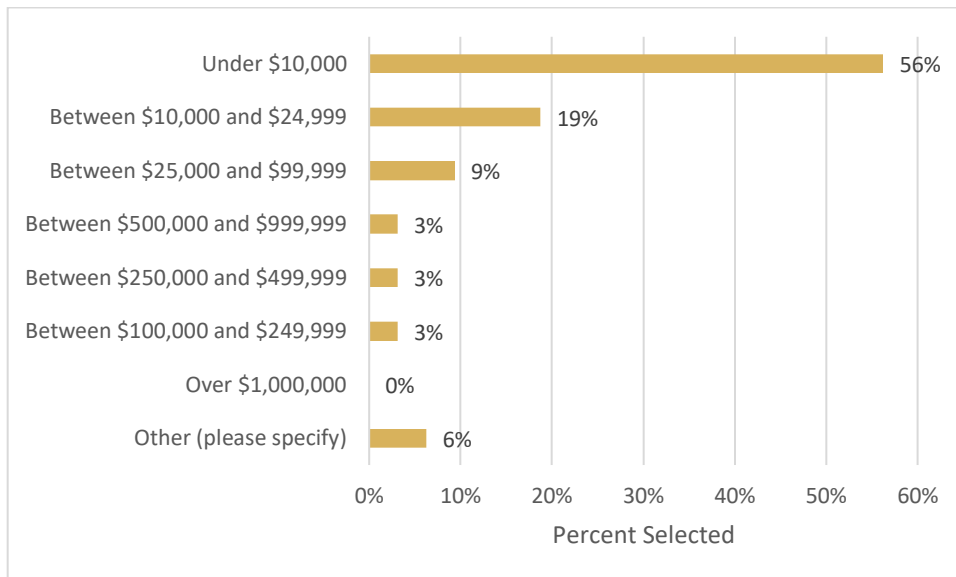


Figure 16. Income distribution across farm businesses in Metchosin

When asked about the importance of farming to their economic livelihoods, 67 individuals responded. Over 75% of respondents indicated that farming was somewhat important or not very important economically, while 73% indicated it was very important to their quality of life.

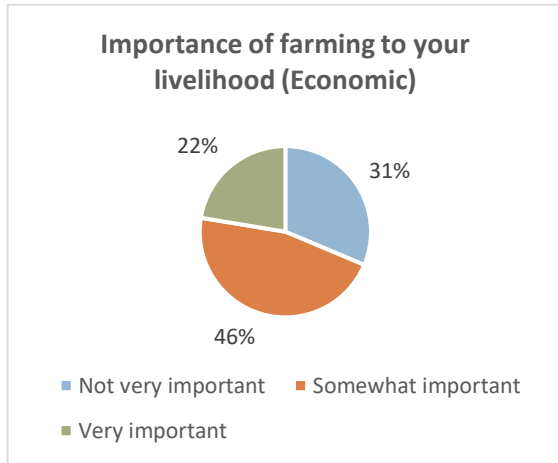


Figure 17. Importance of farming to economic livelihood

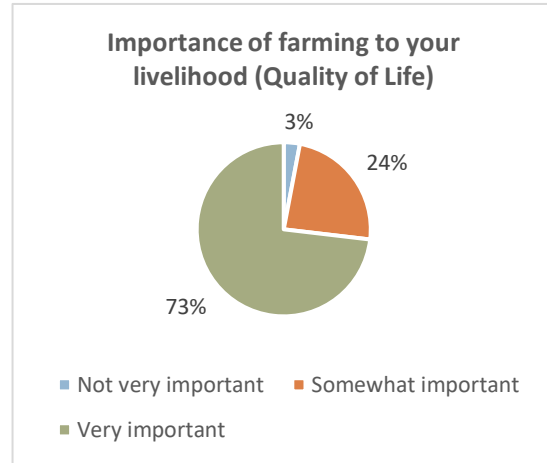


Figure 18. Importance of farming to quality of life

#### 4.3.4 Looking Forward

Respondents were asked if they saw value in creating a single, recognizable “Metchosin Grown” brand to identify products which originate in Metchosin, and 67 individuals responded. Many (60%) indicated support (Figure 19). Of those who selected “other” responses included: “uncertain” and “as long as the quality is maintained at a high standard”.

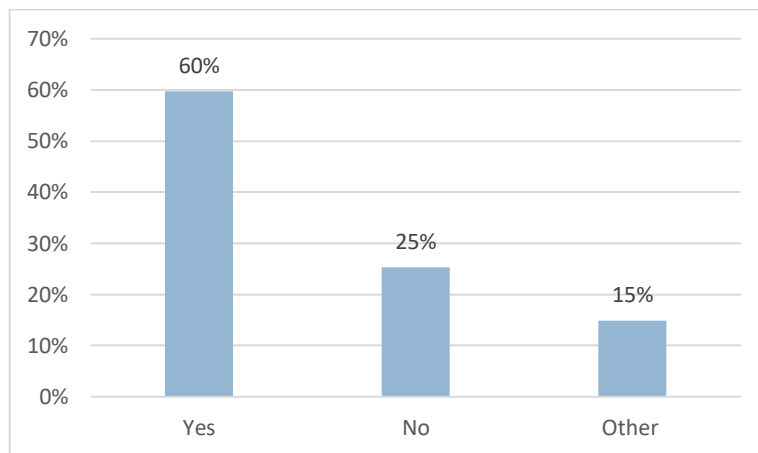


Figure 19. Preference for a single recognizable Metchosin Grown brand.

When asked what the top priorities for growth in the agri-food sector were, 67 individuals responded. The top two responses were housing for farm workers (46%) and educating the public about the importance of

farming (46%). Further opportunities included information for the public about how to support agriculture and improving farmland access. Of those who selected “other”, responses included:

- educating younger generations on the importance of farming,
- supporting local entrepreneurs to lead and inspire the sector,
- developing a local farmers institute,
- incentivizing landowners to actively produce food/ farm products,
- embark on joint marketing,
- develop a retail cooperative,
- lower barriers to farming,
- protect existing farmland,
- increase grazing animal populations, and
- irrigate pastures.

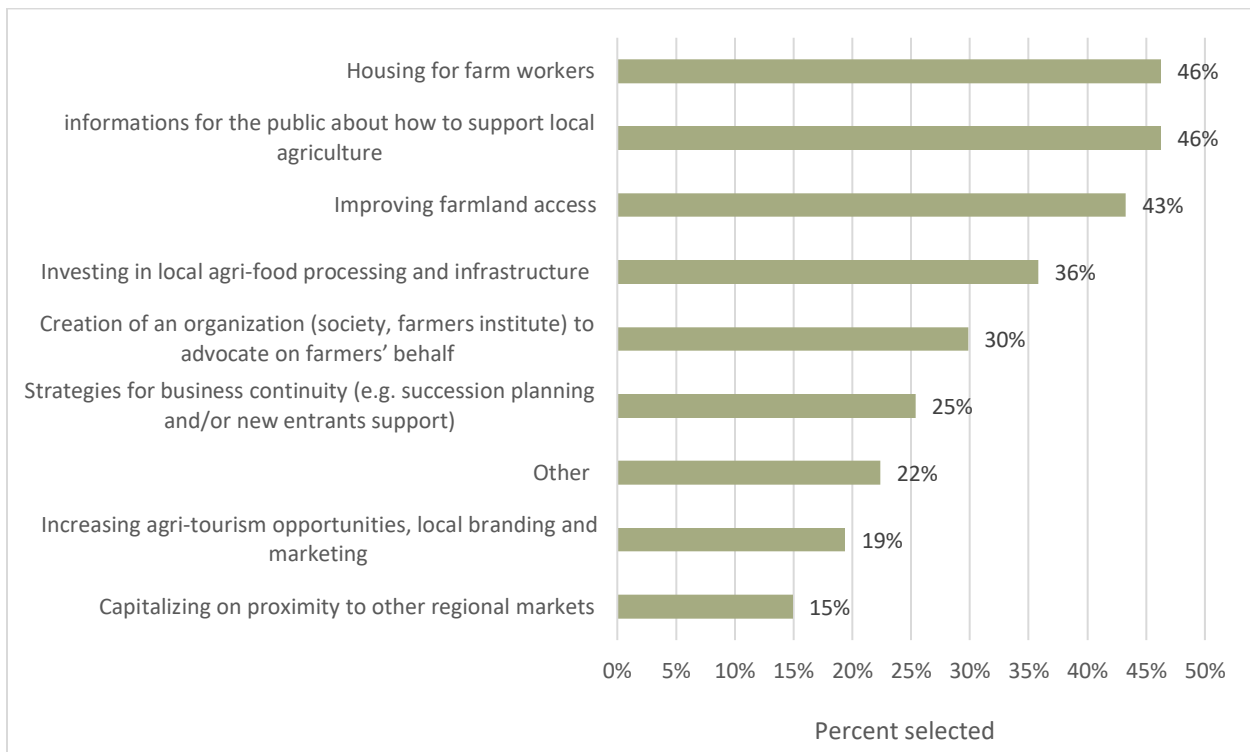


Figure 20. Top opportunities for growing the agri-food sector in Metchosin.

When asked what the most important ways the District of Metchosin could support the agri-food sector were, 68 individuals responded, 2/3 of which indicated “being proactive in protecting farmland”. A high degree of support was also shown for “supporting food system infrastructure through policies and zoning”, and “advocating to a higher level of government”. Of those who selected “other” responses included: support multi-generational farms through housing allowances, and advocate for farmers on predator issues and response.

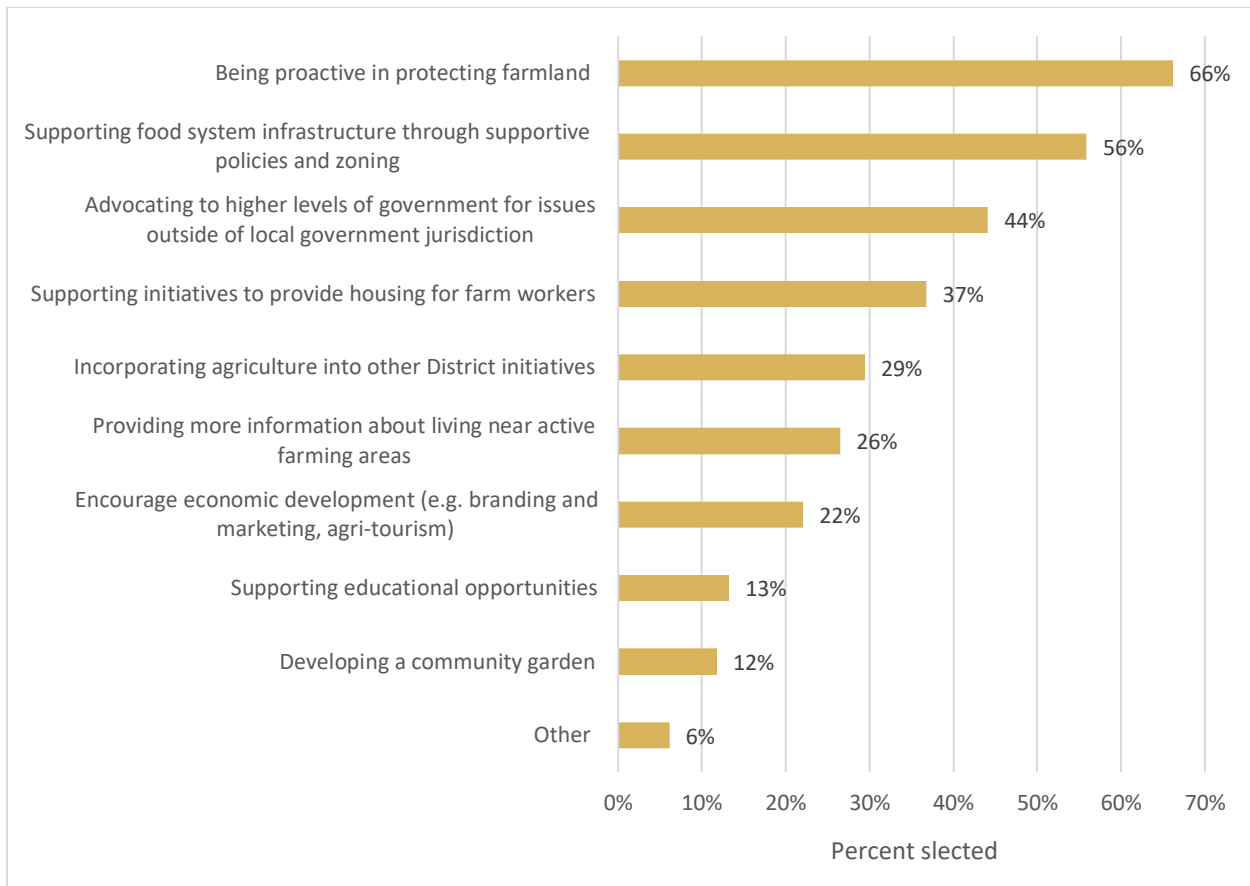


Figure 21. Best ways for the District of Metchosin to support the agri-food sector.

Respondents were asked to describe their ideal vision for agriculture in Metchosin in the next 10 years, 49 individuals left comments which covered the following topics:

- Improved response to issues regarding predatory animals.
- Farmers are collaborating through shared resources, bulk buying and sales/ marketing cooperatives (storefront, farmers market for farmers, joint farmers co-op to share marketing and branding).
- Farming in Metchosin is thriving and revered by the community.
- Diversified farm businesses (large and small, fruit and veg, grazing and market, agritourism)
- Farmland is protected for farming, and there is increased access to farmable land for those who want to grow food.
- Support for multi-generational living/ multiple generations on one piece of land.
- Farmers have access to resources such as manure, tools, information/ advice, and inputs.
- Supportive of agritourism initiatives.
- There is support for new farmers such as information resources, farm tool library and business planning.
- Metchosin is known as a source of locally produced food for surrounding communities.
- There is sufficient and affordable housing for farm workers and operators.
- Improved response on predatory animals.

Some examples of comments include:

*“A vibrant Metchosin Grown brand that brings customers from all over the CRD to Metchosin, ALR land owners leasing their land to farmers and providing housing for them at non market rates, Metchosin becoming the bread basket of the CRD”*

*“Residents and businesses would enjoy access to a rich variety of locally grown and processed products.”*

*“Increased communication, collaboration, coordination and mutual support between farms, increased access to an identified labour pool shared between farms as required. Provision of temporary hostel or small home-based lodging for seasonal farm hands and small home or cottage-based lodging for permanent new farming families as part of a succession plan. Grants for new farmers to purchase land.”*

*“Protecting small scale organic and diverse farming. Also, to do our best to rehabilitate soils and produce high quality foods that can be consumed by people”*

*“We would have a farm market where farmers can drop off their produce and someone would handle the sales. There would be a tax credit for farmers recognizing the value of our grassy fields for carbon sequestration. Farmers would be educated on the best way to farm based on what is known about climate change adaptation and mitigation.”*

The final question in the survey allowed respondents to provide any additional feedback pertaining to the agriculture plan. Responses included:

- There is value for kids to see greenspaces and learning about farming,
- Local government should be supporting farmers in pursuits to diversify the income of their farm businesses,
- There is a desire to see food security in the face of climate change incorporated into the ag plan,
- Suggestion to include an ag coordinator role in the plan to help push recommendations forward,
- Consider rotating spots at the farmers market for small farmers who can't commit to a weekly event.

#### **4.4 Open House**

An open house was hosted on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Bilston Creek Farm. The objective of the open house was to present the Draft Agricultural Area Plan to the public, and allow opportunity for questions and feedback.

The event was attended by 30 individuals, including local producers, residents, District of Metchosin council members and Ministry of Agriculture and Food staff. Consultants presented the draft report, including the background research, engagement findings, goals and recommendations, implementation plan and

monitoring framework. Following the presentation, 3 breakout groups were formed, and consultants facilitated discussions around 3 questions, resulting in valuable input to guide the final revisions of the Agricultural Area Plan. The 3 questions discussed and the feedback received were as follows:

### **Q1. Is the right mix of recommendations included in the plan?**

Open house attendees noted that the recommendations in the plan were helpful but identified some potential additions including:

- Engaging volunteers from the non-agricultural community to support agriculture events
- A need to support water conservation and catchment efforts on agricultural lands
- Creation of an agricultural coordinator for the community, or collaboration with other communities to establish a paid role which could serve as an agriculture coordinator.
- Addressing gaps in affordable housing which impacts availability of labour for farms.
- Inclusion of the fire department and SIFI as potential collaborators and supports to achieve some of the recommendations.

### **Q2. What are the highest priority recommendations?**

Attendees were asked to reflect on the recommendations provided and determine which ones were of highest priority to the community, the following areas were identified:

- Developing a farmers society or institution to help move the recommendations forward.
- Actions which improve economic viability of the community including marketing collectively, revamping the farmers market, and identifying new ways to sell food locally.
- Addressing wildlife concerns, specifically crop losses to resident geese, and livestock losses to cougars.
- Supporting seed and soil preservation as a route to longevity in the agriculture sector
- Addressing invasive species on farmland.

### **Q3. How and by whom, can the recommendations in the plan be best implemented?**

Each recommendation in the plan contains an identified lead and support actors. Attendees were asked to consider if these identified actors were best suited to the job, and how they could best work together to implement the plan. Responses included:

- Seek opportunities to work with the Metchosin Farmers Institute (located in Langford) to revamp the objectives of the Institute and refocus on supporting the agriculture community.
- Collaborate with existing organizations/groups who have useful infrastructure including commercial kitchens, storage space, transportation vehicles etc.
- Collaborate with neighbouring communities of Colwood, Langford and Sooke on joint interests such as food distribution and resource access.
- Improve consistency of DoM support across council changes.

## 4.5 Agricultural Advisory Select Committee Meetings

Over the course of the development of the Agricultural Area Plan, three meetings were held with members of the Agricultural Advisory Select Committee (AASC). These meetings took place in November 2023, January 2024, and February 2024 and served as an opportunity to provide a check-in regarding the progress of the project and share feedback from the engagement process. The consulting team met with the AASC twice in person and once by Zoom. The topic of conversations often centred on the themes to address in the Agricultural Area Plan, questions regarding land use regulations, zoning, and policies. At the meeting in February it was noted that a previous District resolution regarding Genetically Modified Organisms (passed in 2012) was missed, therefore the Background Report was subsequently updated to reflect this information.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Initial engagement activities such as the interviews and surveys helped to develop an in-depth understanding of agriculture and food in Metchosin. The findings from these activities ensured the background information was robust and complete as well as informing early iterations of the Vision, Goals and Recommendations. Feedback from the Open House was integral to ground truthing, and finessing the recommendations to ensure that they were as impactful and realistic as possible. The voices of the Metchosin farming community, and the residents who rely on it, were integral to the creation of the plan.