



The Food Co-op's Farm Fund works to establish programs that benefit the local farming community while encouraging ecological and socially responsible stewardship of our farmland. Since 2000, the Food Co-op has dedicated a portion of its annual donation budget specifically to support sustainable agriculture. You can add your support by donating to the Farm Fund at the registers when you shop at the Co-op.

Sustainable Connections is a membership network of community-focused Northwest Washington local businesses, farms, organizations, and individuals who are committed to building a local living economy. For more info about Sustainable Connections, access their website at sconnect.org.

The Community Food Co-op is Whatcom County's community-owned Natural Food Market. Since 1970 the Co-op has provided quality foods and service, as well as ongoing support for local farmers and community organizations.

How You Can Help

Your donation to the Farm Fund enables the Co-op to continue developing and supporting projects that foster sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County. You can donate at any register in the store or you can mail your donation to:



Attention Jean Rogers
1220 N. Forest
Bellingham, WA 98225

Tax deductible donations

You may make a tax deductible donation to the Farm Fund's "Food to Bank On!" project by visiting www.sustainableconnections.org and clicking the "Donate" link at the top of the page.

If you just wish to send a check directly, please make it payable to Sustainable Connections/ Farm Fund and mail to:

Sustainable Connections
 119 N. Commercial St., Ste. 350
 Bellingham, WA 98225



For more information about the Co-op's Farm Fund, contact Jean at (360) 734-8158 or email jean@thefoodcoop.com.



For more info about the Food to Bank On! project, contact Sustainable Connections at (360) 592-2614 or email derek@sconnect.org.



**Supporting the growth of
 sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County**



1220 N. Forest • Bellingham, WA
 (360) 734-8158

WHY SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FARMING?

As the population in Whatcom County grows, high-quality farmland is being converted to roads, housing developments, and industrial facilities. Supporting the establishment and continued growth of local organic farms helps balance this trend and protect one of our most precious natural resources. Healthy local farms also contribute to the growth of a sustainable local economy and assure a good quality of life in Whatcom County.

Local sustainable farms:

- Supply us fresh, nutritious food
- Maintain stewardship of the land
- Maintain and improve air and water quality
- Provide wildlife habitat, and
- Decrease the CO₂ footprint of food consumption for all of us in the area.

HOW THE FARM FUND WORKS

Each year the Farm Fund initiates or supports projects designed to support the growth of sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County. By working with an advisory committee of Co-op members and local farmers, the Co-op determines projects that can be launched or supported through partnership with other organizations that are committed to sustainable agriculture in our area.

FARM FUND 2003—FOOD TO BANK ON!

In 2003 the Farm Fund is working with Sustainable Connections* to directly support several fledgling sustainable farmers with establishing a market for their produce. This new project, called Food to Bank On!, creates partnerships between these new farmers, experienced growers, and area food banks to provide fresh, organic, and locally grown produce to low-income community members. Participating farmers are paid Co-op wholesale prices for produce delivered to food banks.

Food to Bank On! simultaneously builds the future of sustainable agriculture and the food security of all citizens of Whatcom County by:

- Creating small-scale market opportunities for new farmers
- Providing information and support to new farmers via mentor partnerships with experienced organic growers
- Providing fresh, locally grown organic produce to area food banks
- Encouraging new farmers to explore and participate in working toward community solutions for hunger.

**See back panel for more info about Sustainable Connections.*



FARM FUND—A HISTORY OF SUCCESS



2000 Farmer Survey and Focus Groups

In 2000, the Food Co-op asked members of the local sustainable farming community how they would like to see the Co-op work to maintain and grow the presence of organic and sustainable farming in Whatcom County. The farmers said that increasing the market for local, sustainably produced food was their greatest need, and they asked that the Co-op direct their funding to market development and education.



2001–2002: Whatcom Fresh

In its first two years, the Farm Fund partnered with the Nooksack Valley Center for Sustainable Agriculture to help develop Whatcom Fresh—a labeling program for locally produced foods. The successful development and implementation of Whatcom Fresh has helped raise awareness of the value of Whatcom-based farms and their products with grocery retailers, restaurants, and the public. In 2002, Whatcom Fresh was awarded public and private grants, which will fund the program through 2003.



2002: Bellingham Farmers Market

Farm Fund donations in 2002 also assisted the Bellingham Farmers Market with marketing outreach to Bellingham and Whatcom County residents. As a result of increased advertising and publicity, the Farmers Market enjoyed a record year.