



Richmond Farm School Story And Backgrounder

Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Director of Sustainable Agri-food Systems Dr Kent Mullinix is planning to launch the first university-based urban agriculture school in North America.

Participants in the Farm School would be able to lease one- to five-acre incubator plots of land from the City of Richmond upon completion of a two-year course of study.

Mullinix, working with Richmond agriculturists and sustainable food system advocates, has developed the curriculum and identified teachers. Richmond has endorsed the idea and is looking at making municipal land available for instruction and incubator farming.

He and ISH colleague Dr. Arthur Fallick are also working with other municipalities to develop municipal agri-food systems strategies and action plans that will encourage enhanced human-scale agriculture on land within municipalities and in particular on the urban-rural fringe.

A paper prepared by Mullinix et al for the City of Surrey Economic Summit in 2008 outlines how important it will be for the future that municipalities pro-actively plan for food security now.

Mullinix says this type of urban agriculture may be critical to ensuring our future food security and sovereignty. He says cheap produce, grown far from home and moved around the world, in the future likely will not survive factors such as global climate change, the rising price of the oil necessary to move it and the threat of food-borne illness.

The newly opened research lab and biocontrol product incubator at the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture will develop bio control products that will contribute to this type of environmentally sound farming.

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