

[FarmWorks Investment Co-Operative Limited](#) in Nova Scotia is bringing leadership through innovation to the Canadian food system. By integrating Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF)<sup>1</sup> opportunities to support emerging and existing food system entrepreneurs, FarmWorks is re-establishing and connecting the pieces needed for a more localized Nova Scotia food system. To date, FarmWorks has raised over \$1.4 million in investment capital from 312 Shareholders and has used this money to support 56 food related businesses across the province.

FarmWorks captures Food: Locally Embedded, Globally Engaged (FLEdGE) Partnership themes under its inclusive umbrella as they provide opportunities for integration and scaling up across their regions. They also offer an excellent example of the potential of innovative governance as they adopt and adapt the CEDIF program to meet food system needs.



FarmWorks funded projects

Projects run the gamut of a healthy local food system and include: producers such as [Stewarts Organic Farm \(stewarts-organic-farm/\)](#) that are expanding their multi-generational farm based on direct selling to also include grains and a malting operation; The Port Grocer, Café and Art Space that retails food, supports regular community events including a community garden as well as providing a café space ([theportgrocer.ca/](#)); Meadowbrook Meat Market that processes and sells local meat and related products including their own line of spices ([meadowbrook-meat-market/](#));

and, several craft micro-breweries including [Boxing Rock Brewery \(boxingrock.ca/\)](#). All of these business initiatives emphasize various aspects of community economic development through an increasingly networked and integrated localized food system.



Oakview Farms at Seaport Market

The impact and potential of this approach is recognized beyond the province as Linda Best, a FarmWorks founding Board Member, is invited to present on their groundbreaking work in many places outside Nova Scotia including at the Southern Interior [Keeping it Rural](#) Conference in Salmon Arm, BC, followed by consulting for the Kamloops Community Investment Team. Her advice was also sought

<sup>1</sup> Through CEDIFs in Nova Scotia investors are eligible for provincial tax credits of 35% for 5 years, 20% for an additional 5 years, and 10% for 5 years. PEI ([35%](#)), Manitoba ([45% on investments of up to \\$60,000](#)), and New Brunswick ([50% credit for investments up to \\$125,000 per year](#)) have also launched their own versions of the CEDIF initiative.

by VanCity, itself an innovative force on the Canadian co-operative landscape, as they established their [Knives and Forks](#) Community Investment Cooperative. Linda has also presented at Slow Money in Louisville Kentucky, at [Food Farm Fish and Finance](#) sponsored by [Sustain Ontario](#), at [Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation](#) and has engaged in conversations across the Atlantic provinces and with US colleagues in Maine and Minnesota, broadly expanding awareness of FarmWorks. In September Linda and Thian Carman, FarmWorks youngest farmer from Meadow's Brothers' Farm, will be speaking at Rural2Rural in Ontario.

The goal is to continue to move the needle for local food production from the estimated 13% ([Figure 16, Scott, Cameron, Benjamin 2010](#)) to 20% by 2020. As Best explains, every additional 10% of food dollars spent by Nova Scotians on local food increases total income for local farmers by more than [\\$50 million dollars](#).

**There are uncounted opportunities for** local, sustainable food production to be a catalyst for rural economic development. And, all Nova Scotians can benefit from the production and provision of healthy food. FarmWorks volunteer Board of Directors and Shareholders are helping to grow resilient communities by supporting Nova Scotian entrepreneurs.



**The Port Grocer weekend market. The addition to the building was built with the help of volunteers from the community**