



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reports Target Food and Agricultural Policy Reform

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Canada's food and agricultural policies are slated for renewal in 2008. This may be good news for the local communities and producers who currently bear the burden of most costs associated with the infrastructure that supports the current agri-food system. The producers and distributors of imported "cheap food" make no contribution to that infrastructure and do not provide other benefits to local society and ecosystems.

Two new memos recently released by Environmental Law Clinic (ELC) student Kendra Milne may prove to be useful tools for groups wishing to advocate for more positive policies.

Prepared for Edible Strategies, Milne's first memo indicates how the supply management system in BC creates legal barriers for local food production and distribution. She also examines how provincial and federal trade agreements can make it difficult for small-scale producers to compete with corporate imports.

Milne's second memo looks at solutions, challenges and areas for reform. She notes that while there are significant restrictions in supporting and encouraging local food production, "there is some international trade case law that supports trade restrictions based on environmental conservation."

In summary, the memos:

- (1) lay out a brief map of agricultural regulation relating to food production and distribution in Canada,
- (2) examine how the British Columbia supply management system may bar increased local food production and distribution,
- (3) examine how inter-provincial and international trade agreements may restrict local food production
- (4) summarize key cases that challenged trade agreement provisions on an environmental basis,
- (5) examine possible room for a domestic support program geared towards encouraging local, sustainable agriculture; and
- (6) examine other ways in which local food distribution could be encouraged or supported and how these initiatives have been interpreted in trade disputes.

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Contact:

PDF versions of Kendra Milne's report are available at www.elc.uvic.ca.

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The Environmental Law Centre (ELC) is a non-profit society that operates out of the University of Victoria, Faculty of Law providing public interest environmental law clinical courses to law students.