

March 2011

Regional Food System Strategy



MUSTEL GROUP
MARKET RESEARCH



Executive Overview

The majority (93%) of residents agree that it is important to protect agricultural lands in the Metro Vancouver region, with 67% who feel it is 'very' important.

The most common reasons why protecting agricultural land is important to residents are: protection of agricultural land/food sources, environmental impacts, and self sufficient food production, followed closely by concerns about overdevelopment, economic benefits and locally grown food being safer/healthier. Alternate views expressed by small groups are that food can be better produced elsewhere in the province, land should be developed, and a balance should be found to support a growing population.

- When asked what are the most important factors when buying or selecting food, top of the list is nutritional value, followed closely by locally grown or produced, and cost.
- Approximately nine-in-ten Metro Vancouver residents (86%) believe it is at least 'somewhat' important to buy locally grown or produced food, with 45% saying it is 'very' important.
- Residents identified economic benefits as the main reason locally grown or produced food is important; it builds the local economy and supports local farmers. Environmental benefits and production of healthier/fresher food are other perceived benefits.
- When grocery shopping, the majority (67%) of Metro Vancouver residents intentionally look for food that is grown or produced in BC.



Executive Overview cont'd

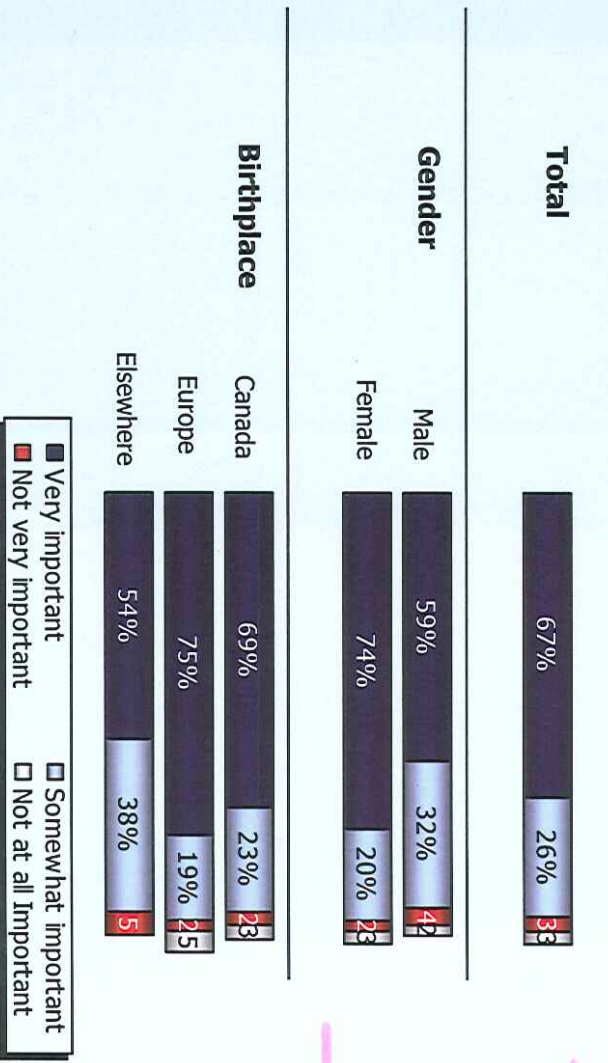
- While the majority (73%) of those who shop for locally produced food report to find and identify such food at least 'somewhat' easily, only one-in-five find it is 'very' easy.
- Residents suggest that the best way to help them find or identify local food more easily is through labelling, and to a lesser extent through advertising.
- To measure residents' awareness, respondents were asked how food wasted in homes could be reduced. Overall, half of residents believe that the best way is to not over-buy. Additional measures cited include using leftovers, better menu planning and education.

Summary

In summary, the majority of Metro Vancouver residents value and understand the benefits of local food production. Furthermore, most try to support local producers by attempting to buy and consume food that originates locally, but there is room for improvement regarding finding and identifying these items.



Importance of Protecting Agricultural Lands



- The majority (93%) of residents believe it is at least 'somewhat' important to protect agricultural lands in this region, with 67% who feel it is 'very' important.
- Residents more likely to view this mandate as 'very' important are females (74% vs 59% of males) and those born in Canada and Europe (69% and 75% vs 54% born elsewhere).
- This opinion is consistent across all regions.

Base: Total (n=450)
 Male (n=217)
 Female (n=233)
 Canada (n=305)
 Europe (n=61)
 Elsewhere (n=80)

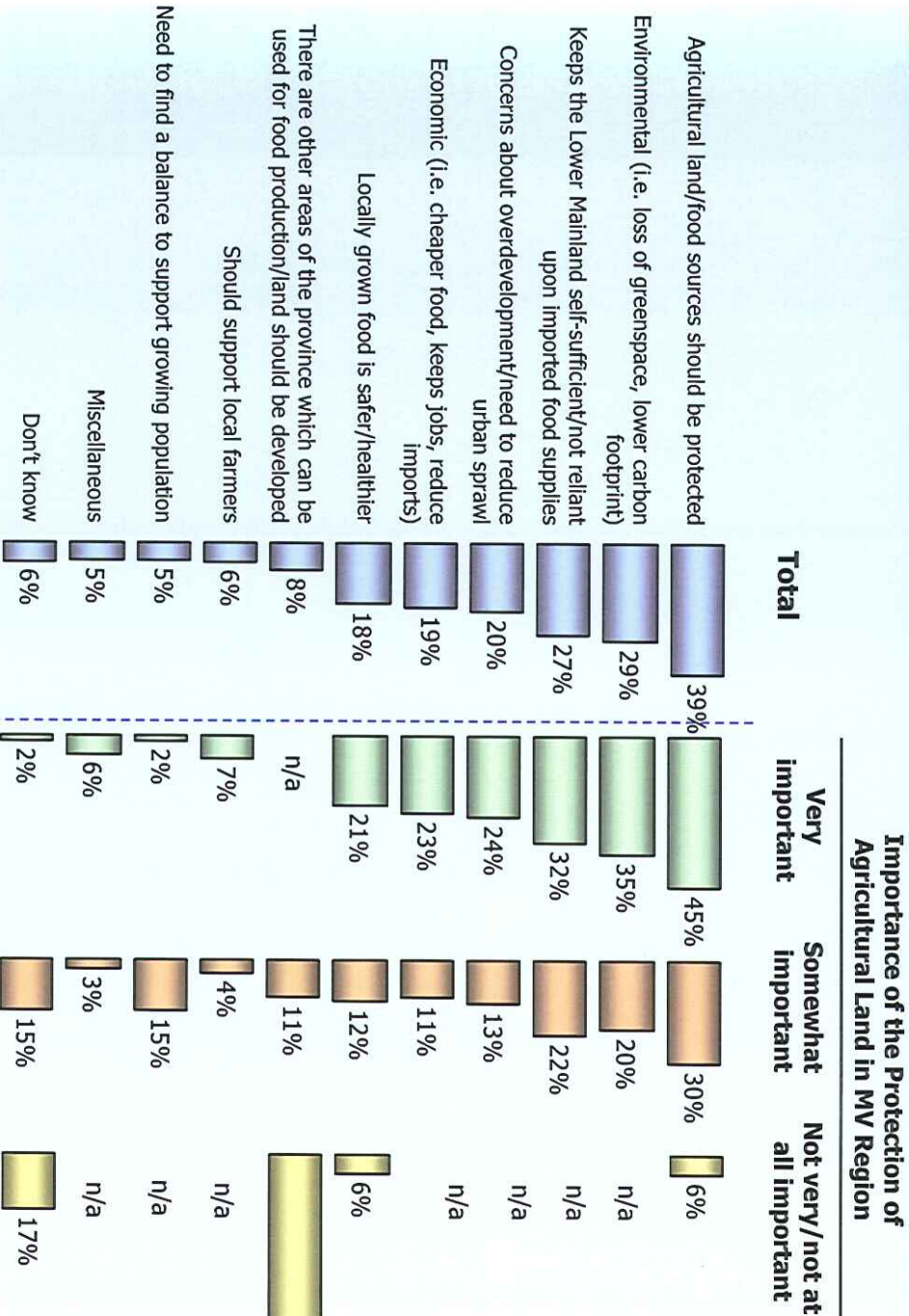
Q.1a) Over the years, a number of measures have been taken by local governments to protect agricultural land in the Metro Vancouver region. How important is it to you that we continue to protect agricultural lands in this region?



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Reasons Regarding Opinions of Agricultural Land Protection (Unprompted)



Base: Total stating an opinion (n=443)

Very Important (n=308)

Somewhat important (n=112)

Not very/not at all important (n=23)*

*Caution small base size

Q.1b) Why do you say that?

- Residents were probed for their reasons why or why not protecting agricultural land in Metro Vancouver is important. Overall, top mentions include protection of agricultural land/food sources, environmental impact, self sufficient food production, followed closely by concerns about overdevelopment, economic benefits, and locally grown food being safer/healthier.

- Keeping the Lower Mainland self sufficient and not reliant upon imported food supplies is mentioned more often by City of Vancouver residents (38%), whereas, environmental impact is of greater importance to those residing in Burnaby/New West (42%).

- Alternate views expressed by a small group (less than 10% each) include producing food elsewhere in the province, developing land, and finding a balance to support a growing population.