

# Community Engagement in Developing Prospects for a System of Domestic Fair Trade for Food Products [A PEI PILOT]

*A Project of Cooper Institute and the National Farmers Union*

Project 2.17

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# Introduction

## **Community Engagement in Developing Prospects for a System of Domestic Fair Trade for Food**

**Products: A PEI PILOT** is a two-year project. It is designed to examine new possibilities for establishing a Domestic Fair Trade system for food in Canada. It will involve communities in processes of interactive learning about Fair Trade, in planning procedures, and in establishing a foundation for a Fair Trade system.



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# Background and Rationale

Research results will provide a basis for education-for-action programs engaging the various PEI food-interest sectors.

In community learning circles and forums, participants will: become familiar with what Domestic Fair Trade is; identify the opportunities for, and obstacles to, Domestic Fair Trade; learn how to involve a wider circle of farmers and other citizens/residents; engage in developing sound principles for a Domestic Fair Trade food system; and design a tentative process for founding a Domestic Fair Trade system.

The project aims to export its model of engagement to other parts of Canada. It proposes eventually to engage major players across the Canada, who have the power to constitute a national Domestic Fair Trade system for food.



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# Community/University Collaboration

- Cooper Institute, National Farmers Union  
(Region 1)
- M.S.W. student



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# Project Methodology

## The project will:

- draw on the experience and wisdom of people engaged in agricultural production, processing and marketing;
- identify successes in establishing and maintaining Fair Trade as an ethic and practice;
- explore appropriate approaches and solutions relating to Fair Trade.

## Project activities:

- research into the history of Fair Trade, the opportunities, and the obstacles;
- production of a plain-language discussion paper;
- interactive education of farmers and other PEI residents;
- development of principles for a Domestic Fair Trade system;
- creation of a plan for the dissemination of the engagement process.



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# Main Findings To Date

The research is in an early stage and will be ongoing. The following findings are reflective of the current phase of the research.

## Findings:

- The participants that have been recruited for this research represent various sectors, such as farmers/producers, community organizers, supporting academics, and policy makers.
- People working on Domestic Fair Trade initiatives in Canada and the US are interested in sharing their experiences for research purposes.
- People working on Domestic Fair Trade initiatives are interested in learning more about other Domestic Fair Trade initiatives.



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# Results

- Plain-language document based on research into efforts to establish and maintain Domestic Fair Trade as an ethic and practice;
- Capacity-building workshops (3) involving a group of 6-8 farming and non-farming citizens. These will be aimed at developing competent reference group, conversant with the ethic and practice of Domestic Fair Trade;
- Public information sessions (2) about Domestic Fair Trade;
- Reports from each workshop and information session.



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# Benefits to Student

- Research & writing skills
- Experience in community engagement around a particular issue
- Organization & Facilitation skills development
- Evaluation & Reporting



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# Conclusions and Next Steps

The research is ongoing and the following conclusions emerge from the current stage of the research:

- The participants in this research project are interested in reading the final report
- This research will help inform participants about the work of other Domestic Fair Trade initiatives

The next steps in this project will include:

- Formation of a local Domestic Fair Trade reference group
- Developing capacity-building workshops (3) involving a group of 6-8 farming and non-farming citizens
- Holding public information sessions (2) about Domestic Fair Trade



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