

Foothills Gazette

Applications available for 2011 Food to Bank on program

September 18, 2010 by [Becca Schwarz](#)

WHATCOM – Applications are now available for the 2011 Food to Bank On, a Sustainable Connections project that connects beginning sustainable farmers with training, mentors and market support while providing fresh high-quality food to needy residents in Whatcom County. The Food To Bank On program provides farmers with less than three years experience with a consistent source of income at market rates, and helps them learn the intricacies of seasonal production and delivery. Twenty-seven farmers have participated in the three-year program.

Participants also gain business training, farmer-mentors, an educational stipend, marketing assistance and are paid market rates to deliver thousands of pounds of fresh produce to local food banks.

These fledgling farmer-run businesses offer products ranging from produce to medicinal herbs, mushrooms to eggs, reflecting the goal of diversifying locally-available agricultural products. In 2009, Food To Bank On farms delivered 5,000 lbs of food worth over \$9,000 to area food banks, soup kitchens, shelters and social service agencies.

Food To Bank On (FTBO) was founded in 2003 by the Community Food Co-op's Farm Fund in cooperation with the local nonprofit Sustainable Connections, who now administers the program as its permanent home.

2011 Food to Bank On applications are due November 1 and are available at <http://sustainableconnections.org/foodfarming/FTBO>. For more information contact Sara Southerland at sara@sconnect.org.