



Shuswap
Community
Farm Coop

Grown in the Shuswap,
Naturally!

Shuswap Community Farm Coop Farmers' Roundup Results Report

Pillar Discussion Findings, Bottlenecks,
Collaboration, Advocacy, and Next Steps

Prepared for: Local food partners and government agencies

Date: February 28, 2026

Prepared by: Shuswap Community Farm Coop (SCFC)



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1. Executive Summary

The Shuswap Community Farm Coop (SCFC) convened a Farmers' Roundup to gather practical input from farmers, food producers, and farm supporters on strengthening local food and farming across the Shuswap. Discussion was organized around four pillars: (1) Farmers Exchange, (2) Collaborate/Cooperate/Advocate/Educate, (3) Create Infrastructure, and (4) Productive Land.

Across the four pillars, participants emphasized immediate cost pressures, labour shortages, regulatory and market access friction, and the need for shared storage and processing capacity. Support for cooperative solutions was strong, with repeated calls to sequence work: start with low-cost coordination and pilots, prove participation and demand, then scale toward capital-intensive infrastructure.

This report summarizes the pillar findings, identifies cross-cutting bottlenecks, outlines collaboration approaches with local food groups and Indigenous partners, highlights priority advocacy topics, and proposes near-term next steps suitable for a volunteer-led, fund-constrained organization.

2. Background and Approach

The Farmers' Roundup was designed as a working session. Participants were asked targeted questions under each pillar and provided written responses. Responses were consolidated to identify common themes, alignment, and areas of tension. This report focuses on practical actions that improve outcomes for producers and strengthen the local food system.

Guiding principles:

- Start with measurable, low-cost wins that reduce friction for producers.
- Use pilots and commitments (not just expressions of interest) to validate demand before major investments.
- Collaborate with existing organizations to avoid duplication and build on established expertise.



3. Pillar Findings

3.1 Pillar 1 - Farmers Exchange

Chart note: Directional weighting based on Roundup comment themes (not a statistical survey).

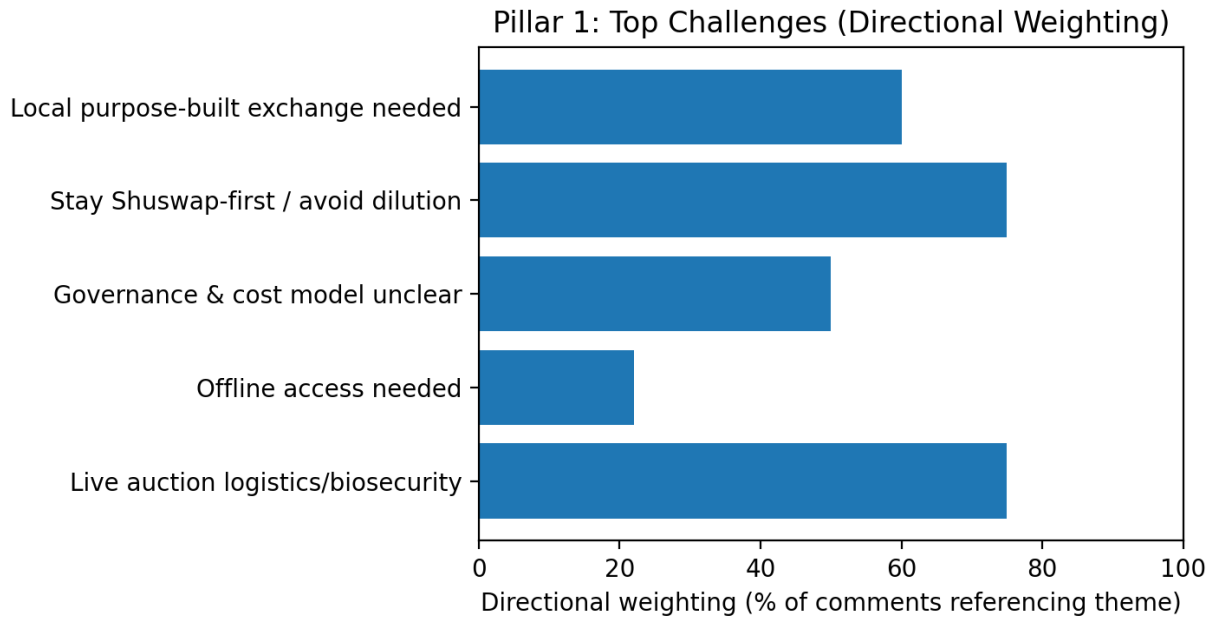


Figure 1. Pillar 1 – Top challenges highlighted in Roundup discussions.

Key themes heard:

- Strong interest in a Shuswap-focused exchange platform tailored to agricultural realities (including livestock and farm inputs).
- Frustration with generic online marketplaces; preference for local accountability and relevance.
- Need for non-digital access options (bulletin boards, local drop points) to avoid excluding farmers with limited internet access.
- Support for seasonal live farm auctions (animals and equipment), alongside concerns about animal stress, disease risk, and the need for strong operational standards.

Implications:

- Begin with a simple "listings-lite" model and expand only if usage is proven.
- If auctions advance, start with feasibility review and clear biosecurity and animal welfare protocols.



3.2 Pillar 2 - Collaborate / Cooperate / Advocate / Educate

Chart note: Directional weighting based on Roundup comment themes (not a statistical survey).

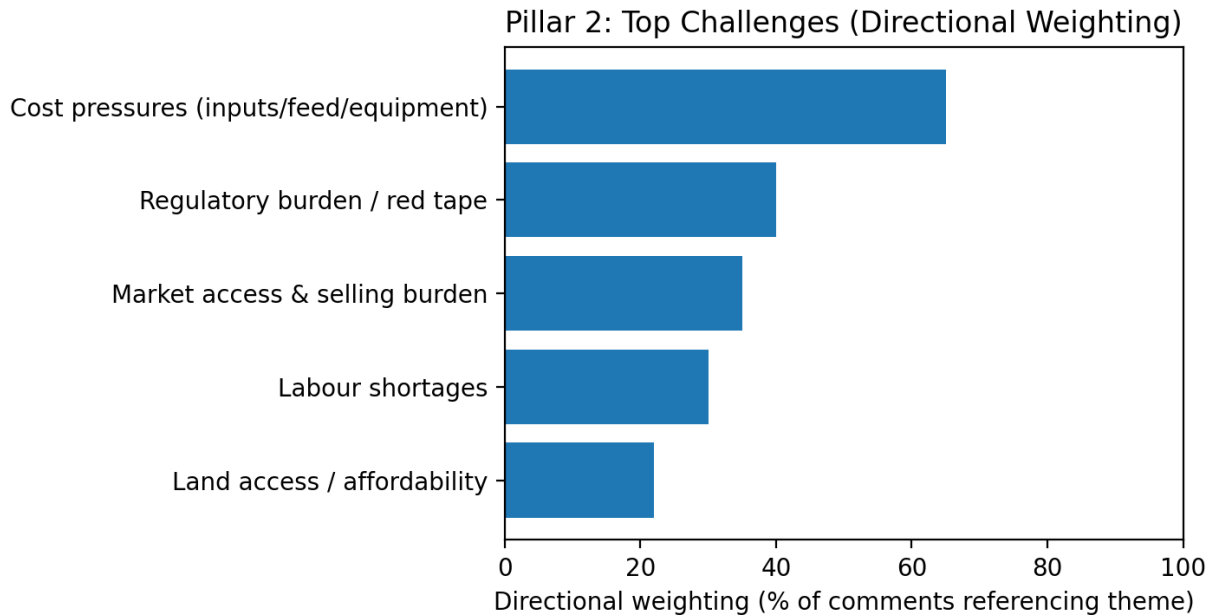


Figure 2. Pillar 2 – Top challenges highlighted in Roundup discussions.

Key themes heard:

- Cost pressures dominate: feed, seed, equipment, insurance, and repair costs are major constraints.
- Labour shortages are persistent, especially during peak seasons; wage economics are challenging.
- Regulatory burden and changing requirements disproportionately impact small producers.
- Farmers value coordination supports such as bulk purchasing, grant/program navigation, and targeted advocacy.
- Strong interest in education and mentorship, especially youth exposure, intergenerational learning, and public education on local food economics.

Implications:

- Lead Year 1 with friction-reduction actions: bulk purchasing pilots, structured farmer roundtables, and a grant/program finder.
- Keep advocacy focused on a short list of specific, locally grounded issues.



3.3 Pillar 3 - Create Infrastructure

Chart note: Directional weighting based on Roundup comment themes (not a statistical survey).

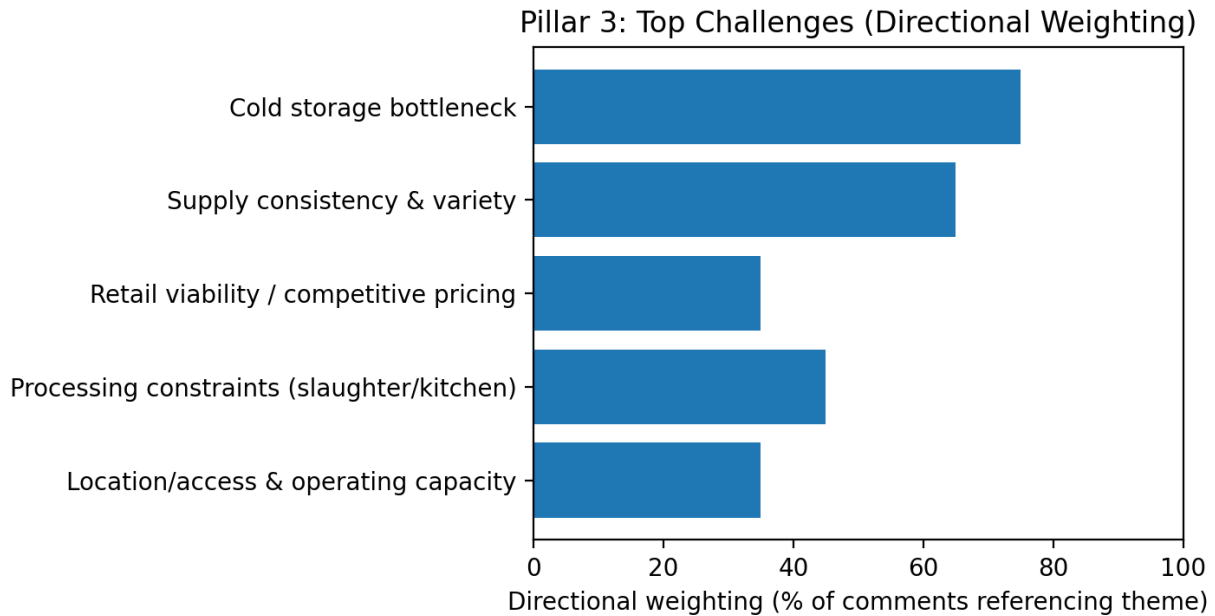


Figure 3. Pillar 3 – Top challenges highlighted in Roundup discussions.

Key themes heard:

- Broad support for a year-round cooperative retail market, with conditions: competitive pricing, reliable supply, competent management, and a convenient location.
- Cold storage is repeatedly identified as a foundational bottleneck (freezer/cooler capacity, backup power, shared access).
- Processing and distribution challenges persist (slaughter/processing access, commercial kitchen availability, distribution coordination).
- Participants recognize infrastructure projects are capital- and management-intensive and require strong planning and sequencing.

Implications:

- Do not start Year 1 by leasing a storefront or purchasing major infrastructure.
- Start with feasibility work and user-funded pilots where possible to validate demand.



3.4 Pillar 4 - Productive Land

Chart note: Directional weighting based on Roundup comment themes (not a statistical survey).

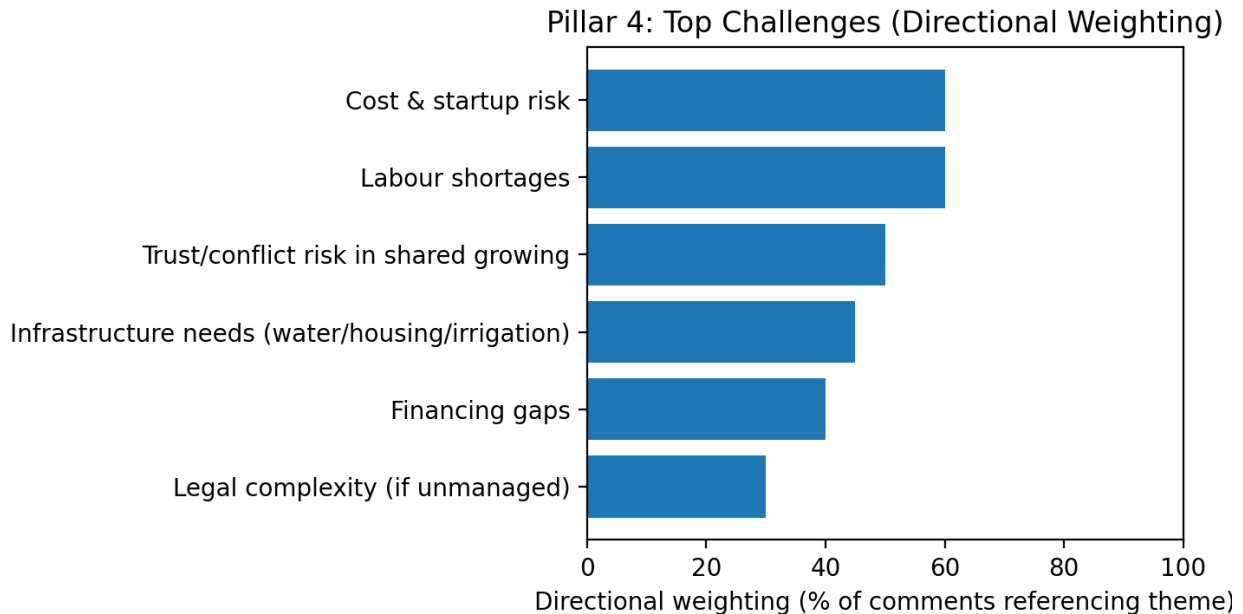


Figure 4. Pillar 4 – Top challenges highlighted in Roundup discussions.

Key themes heard:

- There is underused land in the region, but land availability alone does not unlock production.
- Core barriers are cost and risk: start-up capital, irrigation and structures, housing/workforce constraints, and uncertainty in shared arrangements.
- Trust, privacy, and conflict concerns are major obstacles to land-sharing.
- Strong interest in controlled season-extension tools (greenhouses/hi-tunnels) and structured mentorship models for new growers.

Implications:

- Approach land activation through partnerships with experienced land-matching organizations where possible.
- Year 1 can focus on land identification and pipeline development, while partners manage agreements and matching processes.



4. Cross-Cutting Bottlenecks and Challenges

Chart note: Directional weighting based on Roundup comment themes (not a statistical survey).

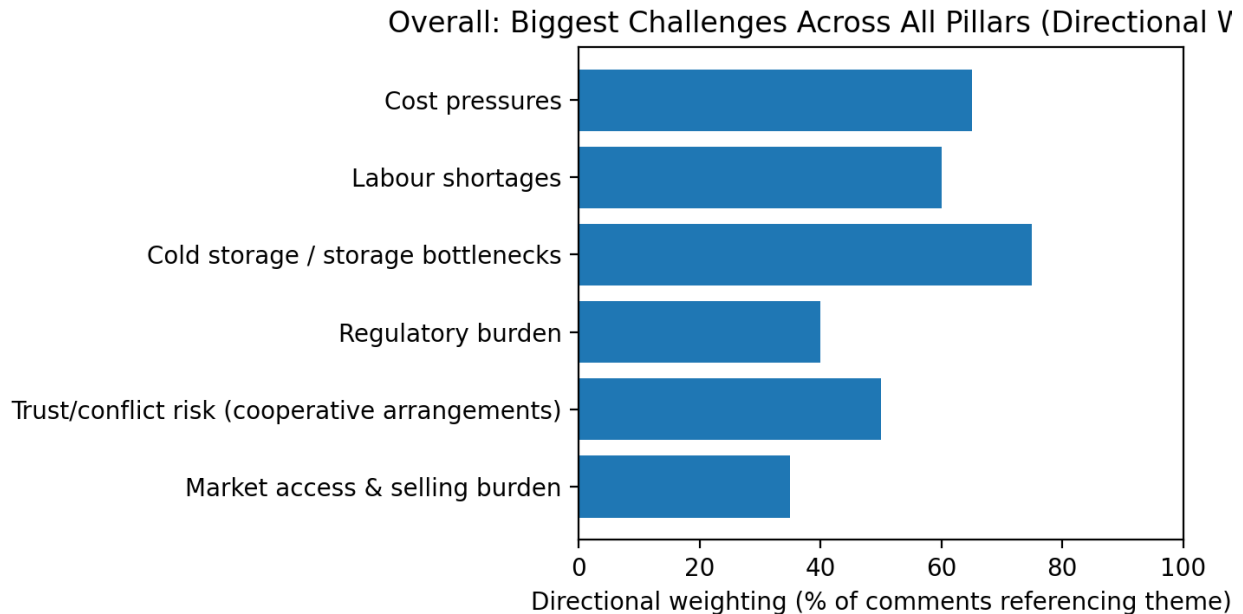


Figure 5. Overall – Biggest challenges across all pillars (directional weighting).

Across pillars, the following bottlenecks repeatedly surfaced:

- Cost and margin pressure: high input costs and limited ability to recover costs through pricing.
- Labour constraints: difficulty finding reliable seasonal labour and the challenge of paying a viable wage.
- Storage and processing gaps: limited cold storage and costly or distant processing options.
- Market access and time: producers cannot easily farm and market simultaneously; selling channels can be time-intensive.
- Regulatory and administrative burden: paperwork and changing requirements disproportionately impact small-scale farms.
- Geography: dispersed communities increase distribution challenges; location decisions can create equity concerns.



5. Collaboration with Local and Indigenous Partners

SCFC's intent is to collaborate rather than duplicate. Multiple organizations already support local food and farming. SCFC will pursue partnership models where each organization can play to its strengths.

Collaboration priorities:

- Coordinate with local food organizations on directories, seasonal availability lists, and joint communications to consumers.
- Work with land-matching partners (e.g., Young Agrarians) to support land identification and outreach while partners manage agreements and matching processes.
- Build respectful, ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities and leadership, guided by Indigenous priorities and relationship-based approaches.
- Co-design initiatives involving Indigenous lands or knowledge, and support Indigenous-led food sovereignty efforts where invited.

SCFC will begin Indigenous partnership work by listening first, identifying shared priorities, and supporting Indigenous-led initiatives rather than presuming a project framework.

6. Advocacy Topics (Local / Provincial / Federal)

SCFC proposes an advocacy approach that is specific and achievable:

6.1 Local / Regional

- Support for practical farmer coordination (communications, meeting space, local resilience planning that recognizes food production and distribution as essential).
- Policy discussions that enable appropriate farm-supportive uses and season-extension structures where suitable.

6.2 Provincial (British Columbia)

- Improved access to small-scale processing capacity (abattoirs and inspected facilities).
- Reducing administrative burden on small producers through program and policy design.
- Insurance availability and affordability issues for farms and farm-related facilities.
- Measures that improve viability for new and expanding farmers (training supports, land access tools, targeted incentives).



6.3 Federal (Canada)

- Streamlined program access for small producers and reduced administrative burden where applicable.
- Risk-based, scaled inspection approaches that maintain safety while recognizing small-producer realities.
- Support for rural food security and resilient local supply chains in federal programming.

7. Next Steps (Short-Term and Year 1)

7.1 Short-Term (First 90 Days)

- Launch a bulk purchasing pilot for one high-cost input (e.g., feed or seed) using prepayment to minimize financial risk.
- Host a structured farmer roundtable focused on one problem with clear outputs and assigned follow-ups.
- Publish a producer directory and seasonal availability list, and a simple "listings-lite" exchange for buy/sell/wanted.
- Create a one-page grant and program finder and a single contact point for navigation support.
- Run a feasibility survey to quantify demand for cold storage and processing supports (volumes, timing, willingness to commit).

7.2 Year 1 (12 Months)

- Repeat and expand bulk purchasing to 2-3 product categories if participation is strong.
- Hold two annual farmer get-togethers (post-harvest and pre-spring) and supplement with smaller, topic-focused sessions only as practical.
- Develop a short advocacy issue list (3-5 topics) and schedule targeted meetings with relevant agencies and elected officials.
- Support land identification and outreach in partnership with land-matching organizations; track acres identified and matches initiated.
- Complete feasibility work for cold storage and processing pilots; proceed only with pre-commitments and a clear operating plan.



8. Conclusion

The Farmers' Roundup confirmed strong regional interest in practical cooperative action. The central message was consistent: reduce friction for producers, build coordination capacity, validate demand through pilots and commitments, and then scale into infrastructure responsibly.

SCFC's immediate focus is to convene local groups and producers around achievable wins, including bulk purchasing, structured problem-solving sessions, improved communications and directories, and feasibility work on storage and processing. In parallel, SCFC will work collaboratively with local organizations and Indigenous partners to identify shared priorities, avoid duplication, and support initiatives that strengthen food security and local resilience.

SCFC invites local food organizations, Indigenous leadership, and government agencies to engage as coordinating partners. Near-term support is most helpful when it enables practical pilots, reduces administrative barriers, and strengthens local producer viability. With focused collaboration and disciplined sequencing, the region can convert the energy and ideas from the Roundup into measurable outcomes over the next year.