

# Blueskin and Karitane Food System Report



## Your place, your food



### Some Guiding Principles for Local Food Systems

1. **Celebrate** the joy and culture of food, the cohesion of community, and the sharing of nutritious, sustaining resources.
2. Continue to **connect community and build knowledge** through the celebration of growing, harvesting and consuming food.
3. Provide a **supportive environment for local growers**, including a fair living wage and job opportunities, and increase the opportunities for development of local food enterprises of diverse scales.
4. **Enhance supply and distribution systems**, so as to better meet the needs of local communities now and into the future, providing resilience against future impacts.
5. Provide **affordable access** to quality and nutritious local food for all of the community.
6. Increase the **diversity of food production**, matched to local needs, and produced in a sustainable manner.
7. Increase awareness of **food provenance, seasonality and availability**, connecting food consumers with the producers and the landscape from which it is produced.

For the full report see:  
[www.brct.org.nz/resources](http://www.brct.org.nz/resources)  
 phone: 4822 048 or email: [office@brct.org.nz](mailto:office@brct.org.nz)



Also, a big thanks to all of the food producers, retailers, community groups and backyard growers who gave up their valuable time to participate in this research study.

### A Taste of Future Opportunities

Strong communities are built around local food.

**School fund-raiser surplus stall**  
 Organised and managed by our local schools, this proposal can link with the curriculum while growing knowledge and awareness of good local food. Risks include: managing the stalls, and peak harvest occurring outside the school calendar year.

**CSA-Direct producer to consumer sales**  
 Where CSA (Consumer Support Agriculture) exists around the globe, buyers directly support growers by committing to regular direct purchases from them. It allows a direct relationship to grow between producer and consumer, and reduces food miles. It keeps more of the food \$\$ circulating within the local economy.

**Local food hub**  
 The idea of establishing a 'local food hub' as a cooperative, where people could have a coffee while waiting for their freshly ground flour, came out of an early workshop. Support waned, however, as the idea was discussed further. Residents generally thought the concept, though attractive, carried too much expense and risk at this time.

**Local food directory**  
 A common tool in the United States, a local food directory aims to better connect farmers and buyers, and enhance awareness of available local food sources. Through time it could help develop awareness of local food availability and help catalyse the development or expansion of new farming and growing. It also offers the potential to strengthen relationships and build a more cohesive community and would be a low cost tool to connect residents.

### What is this leaflet about?

We're sharing some of the key findings of the Blueskin and Karitane Food System report in an easy to read format. We want to give you a 'taste' of the research and direct you to the full report.

### What is the report about?

Appreciation and knowledge of our local food system helps build social, environmental and economic resilience. Improving our 'food culture' contributes to the health and wellbeing of all who participate within local food systems. Furthermore, understanding how our food system can work in the future is important for limiting exposure to the risk of climate change.

This report, while focussed on what 'is' now and what 'could be' in the near future within the Blueskin and Karitane foodshed, also contains insights that we hope will assist others to enjoy the pleasures of local food and its social networks.

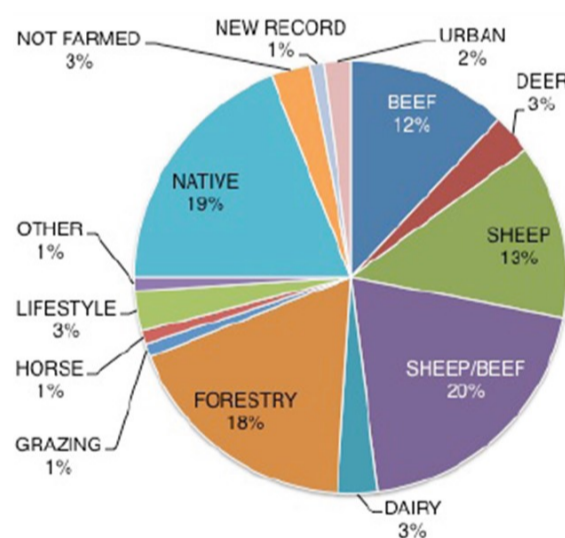
We've looked at the extent of commercial food production within the Blueskin and Karitane Foodshed, the amount of land needed to nutritionally support residents in this area, and we've looked at the informal food economy that binds us close.

### What is the Blueskin and Karitane foodshed?

It's the area where we produce and consume local food. A 'Foodshed' is a term used to designate a geographical area where food is produced and consumed. The map to the right shows the boundary of the Blueskin and Karitane Foodshed.

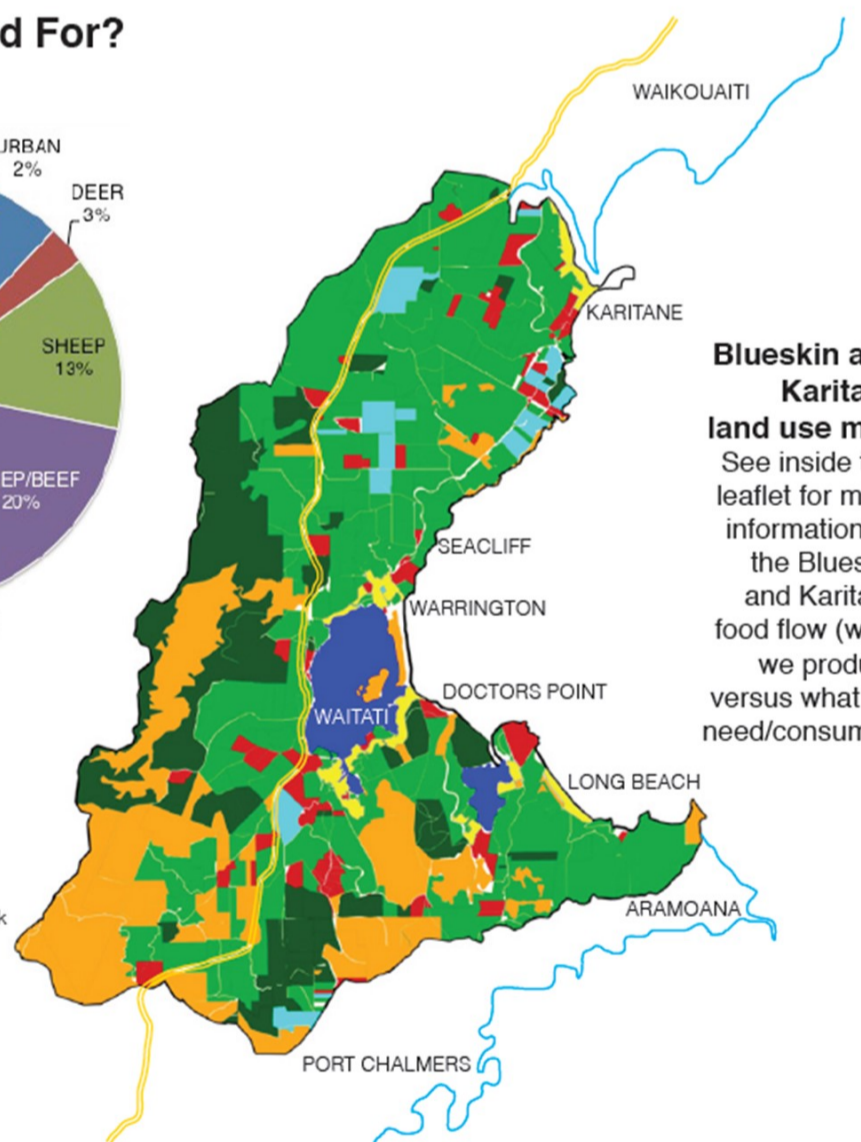
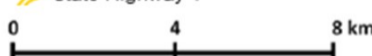
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### What Is The Land Used For?



#### Legend for land use map:

- Extensive pastoral farming
- Non pastoral farming
- Dairy farming
- Forestry
- Urban settlements
- Small scale animal farming & lifestyle block
- Horticulture, fruits and viticulture
- Estuarine open water
- Foodshed boundary
- Continuation of Coastline
- State Highway 1



### Blueskin and Karitane land use map

See inside this leaflet for more information on the Blueskin and Karitane food flow (what we produce versus what we need/consume).

### Population



According to New Zealand statistics census data 2013 there are 2,800 residents within the Blueskin and Karitane foodshed.

### What were the research objectives?

1. Assess the current food system and understand the challenges that we face;
2. Understand and evaluate the opportunities to enhance our food system.

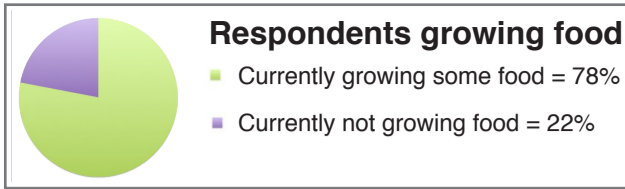
Please open this leaflet to find out more...



## General Information about Respondents

### Number of respondents

51 households were surveyed (127 residents)  
The majority of households are 2 person (35%)



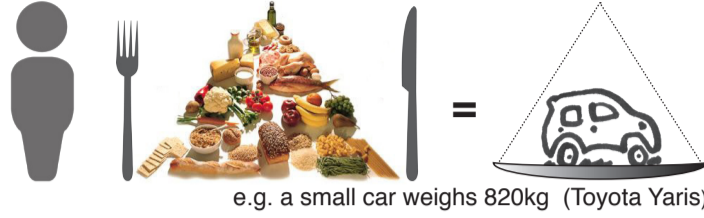
### Average diet

Omnivore 91%  
Vegetarian 8%  
Vegan 1%



91% of all people covered by the study are omnivores, less than 1% (i.e. one person and not one household) indicated they are vegan and 8% are vegetarian.

On average 1 person eats approx. 821kg food per year



### Space used to grow food

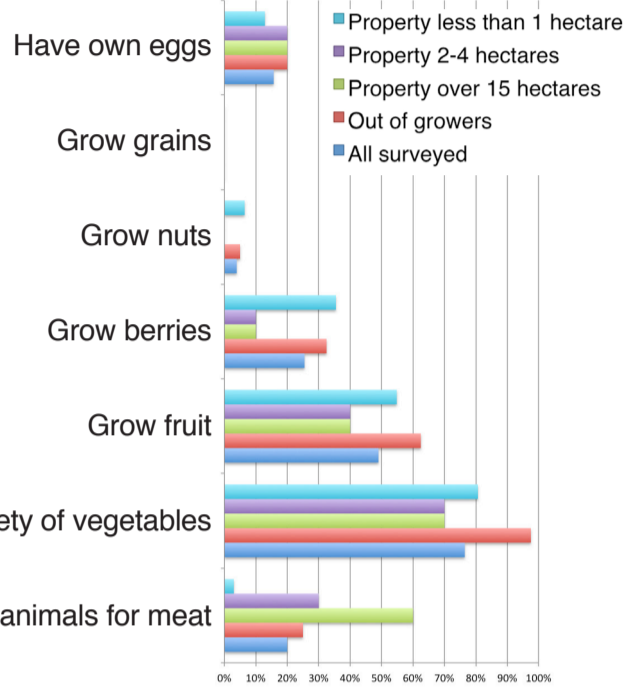


Out of those who are growing food the average space used is just over six average car sizes worth (56.7m<sup>2</sup>).



Apple tree photo courtesy of Jason Ross (www.habitata.co.nz)

### Variety of home grown food



## Perceptions of the Current Local Food System

People were asked if there was already a local food system. Many responded that it didn't yet exist.

"No, I would only see it as a working food system if you could get eggs, potatoes, meat, dairy, veges, fruit – not grains... to a substantial amount of people. At the moment it is just a hobby."

"It's random, not cohesive. I suspect there are lots of people doing things that most of the rest of us don't know about."

### Why Support Local Food

Individual benefits cited included health benefits, better tasting, seasonal food, and greater nutrition from local food.

Environmental benefits cited included lower food miles (and lowered carbon emissions) and less industrial food with fewer intensive inputs.

A recurring theme in the interviews was that the local food system (whether it exists or is to be built) is important for creating strong community relationships and building greater social cohesion. Food security, and the potential for a community to be in control of their food was also a strong theme.

"It is a smart thing to do – to grow more food than we need, so as to share it, we can give to those in need."

Farmers/Growers/Producers reported that being a part of their local food system gave them pride in the food they produce, and which is consumed locally. A shortened supply chain and face-to-face transactions within the local community provide an instant feedback loop and builds trust. A small number of producers were motivated by economic drivers to participate in the local food system, i.e. "allowing me to be self-employed."

### Weaknesses and Barriers

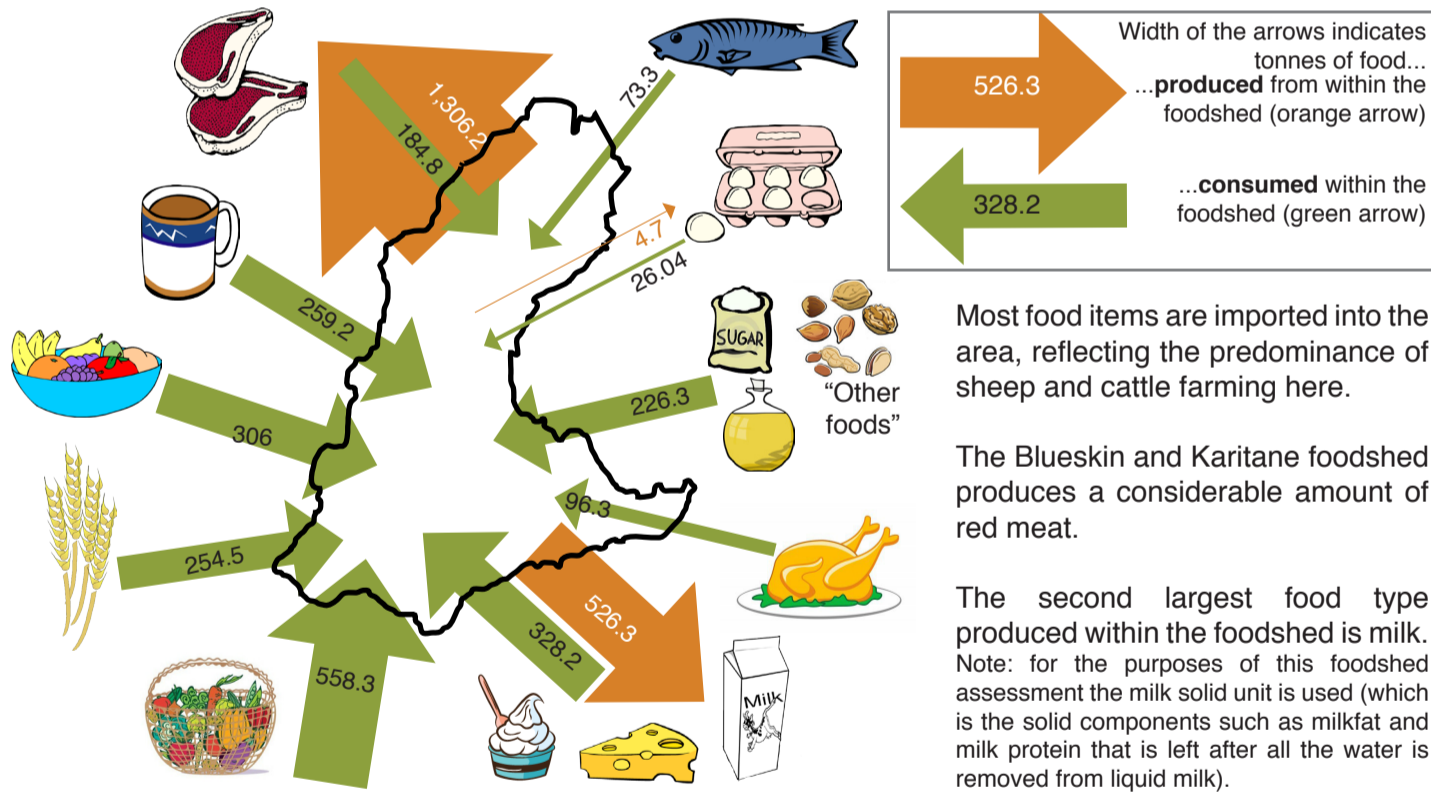
Many people argued that local food is in high demand, but the supply is irregular or unreliable, with lack of labour being one cause.

"Labour is the missing factor. There is a huge amount of energy and skills needed to grow food, and people just don't have that capacity or inclination anymore."

Some producers who had tried to develop a commercial or semi-commercial food operation within their community indicated they had struggled to create a sustainable livelihood from their venture. Demand for their food has traditionally been sporadic and non-committal. This could be due to a number of different reasons, but primarily it was considered that local consumers required reliability and consistency of food and that the often incidental or sporadic supply of occasional foods did not meet their needs. Secondly, the cost of food is an obvious tension amongst community members.

## Food Flow in Blueskin and Karitane Foodshed

Research in the formal food economy shows that approximately 2,300 tonnes of food (typical omnivore diet) is consumed annually and 1,800 tonnes of food is produced per year from Blueskin and Karitane foodshed. Note: This does not include backyard (informal economy) food production.



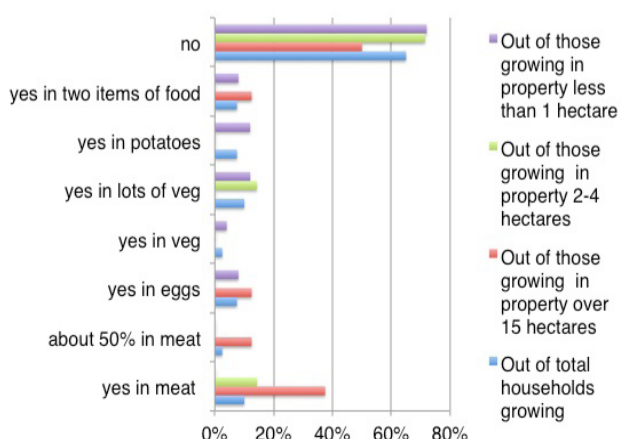
Most food items are imported into the area, reflecting the predominance of sheep and cattle farming here.

The Blueskin and Karitane foodshed produces a considerable amount of red meat.

The second largest food type produced within the foodshed is milk. Note: for the purposes of this foodshed assessment the milk solid unit is used (which is the solid components such as milkfat and milk protein that is left after all the water is removed from liquid milk).

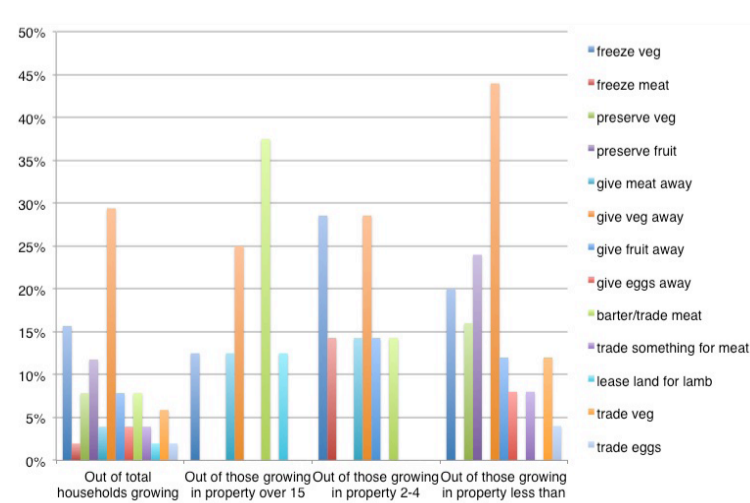
## Self-Sufficiency in the Informal Economy

### Respondent's self-sufficiency



The graph shows that 65% of all the food-growing households indicated they did not believe they were self-sufficient in any type of food growing activity. Some indicated that it is not possible due to our climate, others indicated that they are aiming to be self-sufficient but acknowledge are not there yet.

### What respondents do with surplus food



The sharing of home grown vegetables underpins food activity within our communities, with nearly half of the households participating in this activity.

### Consumers

### Producers

"Local markets tend to be more expensive."

"People don't understand what it takes to produce high quality food in a truly sustainable manner."

"People that sell locally grown tend to exploit in terms of price."

"People expect local food to be cheaper, but given that it is usually small-scale production it is not. The whole mainstream food system relies on efficiencies of production and squeezing down the cost of food. It makes food cheap, but it is unsustainable"

Price and the value of food is a topic of discussion and debate within the community.