

## Letter of Inquiry

DATE: October 29, 2011

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION:

Edmonton Organic Grower's Guild (EOGG)

### ABOUT THE EDMONTON GROWERS GUILD

The Edmonton Organic Growers Guild (EOGG) is a not-for-profit grassroots farming organization that began in 2005. Travis Kennedy, a graduate of the Master of Science in Agriculture from the University of Alberta, created EOGG to focus on urban cultivation and organic crop initiatives. The goals of the organization are to create a sustainable community culture focused on the education and active participation of growing crops. To promote our ideas and promote our ideologies for unique community gardens, we cultivate food, grow niche and culturally specific crops and attempt to augment existing food sources.

We aim to create a sustainable community culture focused on the education and active participation in organic growing. As opposed to the typical community garden plots where a gardener has in individual, isolated plot, we welcome members to participate in any aspect of gardening across all of our 3 acres of land. Our group is unique in that we create a true community garden experience; there are no individual plots, and all members work on various crops, participate in various responsibilities such as preparing the soil, watering crops, planting and harvesting the crops. We want to create a culture of enjoyment and facilitate the practices that promoted our heritage growth and to teach future generations about his as well.

This community ideology also extends to other organizations. We donate many of our produce to food banks and other organizations in need; there is almost always an excess of food (more than members can use) and this excess provides a rich addition to what food banks typically offer. Last year, we donated approximately 2000 lbs of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables to various food banks and organizations throughout the Edmonton community.

We operate on a 3-acre lot approximately 15 minutes away from the downtown

area at the easily accessible University of Alberta South Campus. In our first year we started with a plot of 30 x 7 meters and have doubled our land area every year since then. The opportunity to receive your funding would greatly help us contribute to growing within our community.

## OUR RATIONALE

To increase our land space and crop output we need to update our equipment. Updating our equipment would increase our efficiency, which would then allow us to increase our land and crop output growth. With this in mind, the addition of a tractor with rototillier, shredder and front-end loader attachments would be highly beneficial to us in a variety of areas.

A compact tractor would greatly help with improving our current labour efficiency. Currently, all of our three acres of land are prepped and mowed through hand tools and manpower, which takes an extensive amount of time. While the University of Alberta has graciously donated the use of their tools, their growing season is the exact same time as ours, and the priority usage of the tools rests with them. Our own equipment would help ensure efficiency and autonomy. For example, it takes approximately 4 hours to hand mow our land. A tractor with an attachment would help us do that in much less time. This extra time achieved by using a tractor would exponentially increase our efficiency during the growing season, and as a result increase our crop output. We estimate that with the addition of a tractor, we could more than double our community food donations.

A tractor would also greatly help in increasing our expansion, since it would help with economies of scale as the group grows. The University of Alberta will donate more land to our organization if we ask for it. At the moment we cannot handle more land, but a tractor could triple the size of land under cultivation and really make expansion possible. This expansion also extends to spring preparation and fall cleanup. A front end loader attachment would help bring compost to spread on fields, and we could use it to load pick up trucks and improve the soil. A rototillier attachment would help eradicate root systems in a quarter of the time that it takes now. At the moment, a rototillier attachment would be the most important attachment due to its efficiency in soil actions,

such as pulverizing and preparing the soil for land preparation.

## BUDGET

We are looking at used compact tractors. The costs for a used tractor that would meet our needs ranges from approximately 4500 – 7,000, which does not include the price of attachments. With the tractor plus the added attachments of a rotillier, front-end loader and shredder we are estimating the cost to be minimum \$6000.

We have additional partnerships within the community who help with our operating and repair costs, and so tractor repairs and gas are not factored into this estimate. APIRG and IMANTA graciously donate grants to help cover operating costs. We also have partnerships in the community with the Faculty of ALES and Operation Fruit Rescue here in Edmonton. Additionally, the University of Alberta has stated that they will help with repairs on the tractor and its respective attachments.

## TIMELINE

Our timeline for using a tractor is highly flexible, given that we do not have to delay with its use. The University of Alberta has a lot of unused land at the South Campus and has offered a lot of additional land whenever we are able to take it. The purchase of a tractor would allow us to start increasing our production and cultivation as soon as it is received.