

'High Priest of Pasture' headed to Langley

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There's no surprising Joel Salatin.

"I knew you were going to ask that," the famous farmer and hero of the chemical-free food movement said when asked if small-scale agriculture could really feed the world.

"It's a valid question," he said. "If what we're doing sounds warm and fuzzy but can't (feed the world), it's not credible. So I never tire of hearing that question."

Described by the New York Times as the "High Priest of the Pasture", the Virginia farmer rose to fame after he was featured in the films Food, Inc. and Fresh, and the book The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan. Salatin has written nine books himself, including four "howto's," which are used by many B.C. organic farmers.

The rock star farmer will be the keynote speaker at a Langley workshop about the future of food and farming on Nov. 8. The event is hosted by the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation and will also feature two local farmers - Chris Bodnar of Close to Home Organics and Julia Smith of Urban Digs.

The event follows on the heels of a successful workshop on small-lot agriculture and is aimed at generating production on some of Langley's un-farmed land, said LSAF director Karen Taylor.

Back to the million-dollar question. Salatin said the world does not have a food production problem. "No one is going hungry because there is not enough food. The world has never thrown away as much food as we do today."

Rather, Salatin said the world has a food distribution problem. Doubling production would not solve the problem. Salatin also believes that acre for acre, small farms produce more food than large ones. He is also interested in a largely untapped land source: Lawns.

"There is 36 million acres of lawn in the United States alone," he said.

"There is plenty of land." The LSAF workshop will be held at the Langley Events Centre from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Nov. 8. Tickets are \$25 each, plus GST, and can be purchased by calling any Township of Langley recreation centre.

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• / Virginia farmer Joel Salatin has appeared in two films and written nine books. He'll be in Langley on Nov. 8.

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