

PROCESSING LINEN LOCALLY IN NOVA SCOTIA FOR A VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY

Patricia Bishop

INNOVATION

TapRoot Fibre Lab evolved out of TapRoot Farms. The Fibre Lab has created a small-scale processing machine line to process flax from raw straw to spun linen yarn. The machinery gives farmers the ability to mechanize flax processing and create fibre products without having to hand-process or outsource processing to companies in other countries. The machine line attempts to preserve all parts of the flax plant - from collecting the seed to produce value-added products.

PATRICIA BISHOP



Patricia Bishop and Josh Oulton own and operate TapRoot Farms in Nova Scotia. Together they were named Atlantic Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2010 and in 2014 and were awarded Canadian Food Heroes. Since purchasing the farm in 2004, Patricia has spearheaded the launch of the farm CSA

(Community Shared Agriculture) which provides food from the farm to 400 families.

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DESCRIPTION

The idea for the Fibre Lab came about when Patricia turned a “problem”—an abundance of nettles growing on the farm beyond what could be used in the CSA shares—into a creative potential solution. Could the fibre in the nettle plant be processed into yarn? She discovered that this was, in fact possible. So she and her team looked into other plants that can be grown for fibre. They found that flax grows well in Nova Scotia, and that it was historically grown there for linen production. On further research, they discovered a large market for flax and linen enthusiasts across North America. When they looked at how TapRoot's agricultural expertise could be productive and of benefit in an industry other than food, they decided to move forward with the Fibre Lab.



Harvested flax

Community Shared Linen (CSL) is now seeking support from shareholders for the collection it plans to bring out in 2018.

RELEVANCE

TapRoot Fibre Lab is devoted to creating long line flax processing equipment on a scale that can generate localized economic growth in rural and smaller communities. The processing machine line aims to empower growers to take processing into their own hands and will create local business opportunities for farmers (to grow flax to sell to the owner of the processing line). Having machines/ processing available locally will promote local linen as a viable business venture and draw other parties (farmers, processors, machinists, knitters, weavers, designers, boutiques, energy companies, etc.) into the value-chain. Consumers feel good about purchasing local goods and the local economy will profit.



Call for support to shareholders for the 2018 collection

The movement to “support local” has been very successful in Nova Scotia, Canada. People are recognizing that when they buy locally produced goods, they are supporting their neighbours and communities.



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