

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in
Four Season Greenhouse

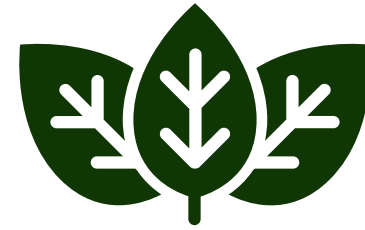


ARCTIC
INSPIRATION PRIZE



PRIX INSPIRATION
ARCTIQUE

2018 AIP 500,000 WINNER



The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

Nominator: Sandy Silver, *Premier of Yukon*

Team: Derrick Hastings (Team Leader), Harry Borlase, Peter Marangu, Eoin Sheridan, Mike Taylor, Nick Wozniowski

This report was compiled and created by the Qatalyst Research Group, with the help of Katie Johnson, the project team, and AIP.



“Veggies and animals are not the only things we grow... we are also growing young and new farmers, and believe strongly in transferring knowledge for a sustainable future!”

TH Farm

Nän kāk nishi tr'ēnoshe gha hētr'ohoh'ay

On the land we learn to grow food

Located on the Klondike River southeast of Dawson City, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH) Farm project was initiated in 2016. It started with a few wall tents and outbuildings and has since grown to multiple chicken coops and a couple of acres of vegetable production. The farm produced 15+ crops over the years, ranging from different types of vegetables, berries, and herbs, to flowers and bedding plants that are used for contracted gardens in town.

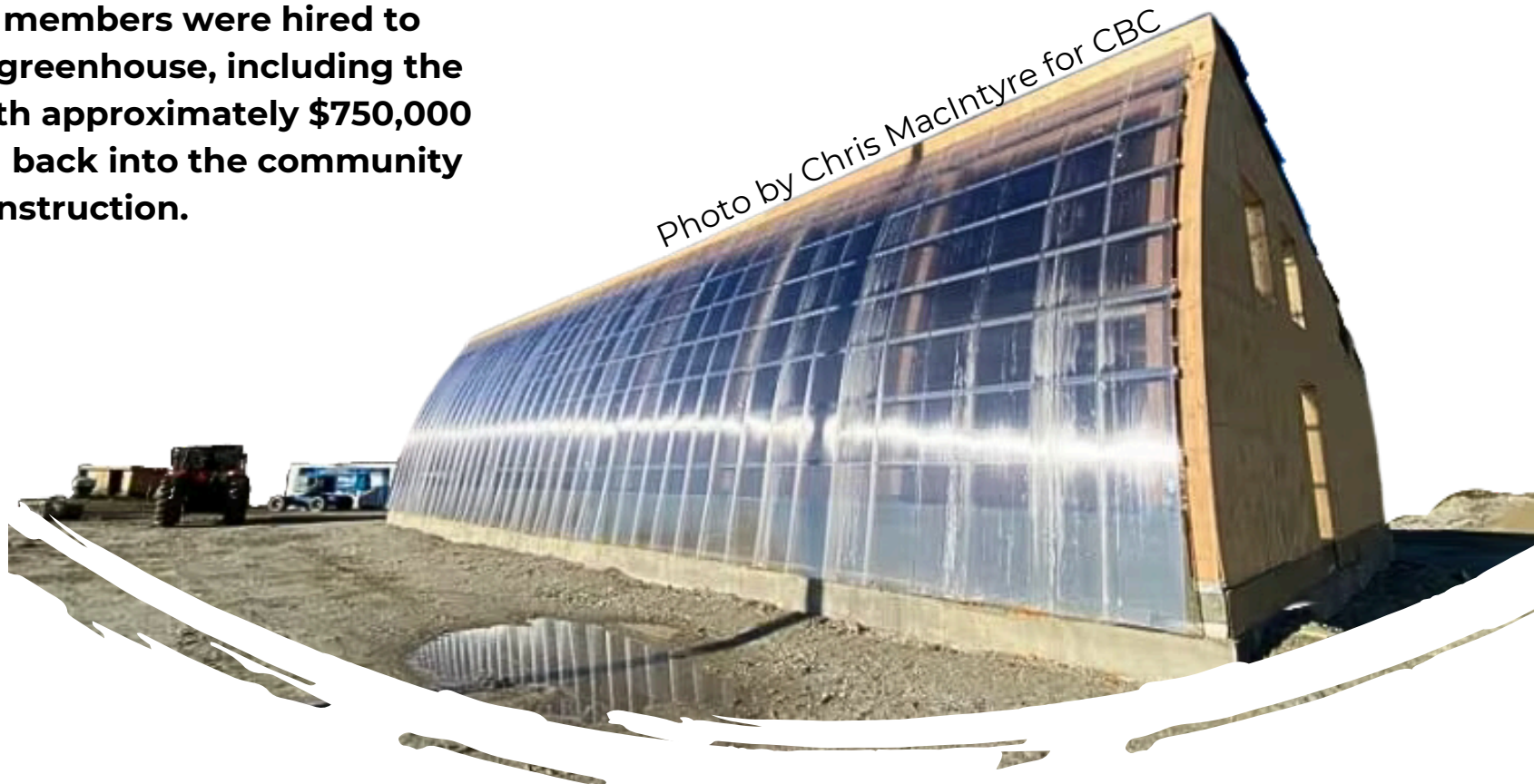
Over time, a certified egg production facility, a value-added meat processing facility, and a community hub for events have been added. 700 broiler chickens, 350 laying hens, and a family of pigs keep workers on the farm busy.



Seasonal greenhouse structure completed

The unique local climate conditions, long days, summer heat, and early frost, flooding due to climate change all make it difficult to grow fresh produce for more than one season. With the help of AIP funding, The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm partnered with Yukon College to design the large greenhouse that will extend growing season to year around and increase access to fresh food . Despite delays due to Covid pandemic and personnel changes, Phase 1 of the project, the greenhouse superstructure, was completed in 2023. Because of the complexity of the greenhouse and systems in place, it requires substantial engineering and unique skill sets to install.

12 community members were hired to construct the greenhouse, including the contractor, with approximately \$750,000 being injected back into the community through its construction.





“Food can bring people together. It's part of what's necessary for life so we want to contribute to helping relieve the burden of inflation by getting people organic foods cheaper, or free, and in quantities that actually impact our reliance on external food producers.”

Derrick Hastings (CBC)

Securing a Year-Around Source of Fresh Produce and Other Food Staples

The partnership with Yukon College created opportunities to develop innovative ways to grow sustainable and organic foods. The farm grows unique produce that are not easily found in the North. For example:

- Different kinds of cauliflowers
- Napa Cabbage (Chinese vegetable) is used to produce kimchi
- Mushrooms are cultivated by recycling buckets from the local ice cream shop (oyster mushrooms)





Community nutrition programs

The farm supports community nutrition food programs by delivering food through various programs such as:

- Meals on Wheels that provides fresh food to Elders and vulnerable community members.
- A community nutrition program that delivers fresh food to schools to serve in school lunches, which encourages healthy eating among children.



Sustainability

The farm sells food to the government, creating a unique circular economy, and also sells produce to the restaurant and stores. TH Farm is federally regulated for egg distribution, and has recently started growing and selling pigs, chickens, rabbits, turkeys which increased farms income. In addition, the farm was contracted to provide plants and maintenance for the Parks Canada commissioner's residence in Dawson City in 2022 and 2023, and will be returning to the local farmer's market in 2024.





“A farm is effective. You have people staying in their community, being productive, having hope, and being part of a team effort. And then having good food, which helps people just be more healthy in their minds and bodies.”

Derrick Hastings (APTN)

Developing experiential learning curriculums and workshops

TH Farm plans to provide teaching programs for individuals to learn butchering and seed and mushroom growing. Citizens are encouraged to come and stay at the farm for free to learn agricultural skills, while earning a small income in the process (APTN).

In summer, there are about 20 people working at the farm, many of whom are youth. Johnathon Robinson has been working at TH farm since he was 14:

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"I'm still loving every moment of working out here. I started just as a youth farm [labourer] and now I'm currently the supervisor for all the youth on the farm. This place has shown me so much about a good worth ethic and the value of having organic fresh produce within the community. It has also grown so much in the last 6 years. From having only 50 meat birds for [butchering] and a handful of laying hens, and now we have hundreds of [egg] layers and will butcher up to 600 meat birds along with 200 turkeys and usually about a dozen pigs. It has been an amazing last 8 years and I cannot wait for many more good ones to come."

Johnathon Robinson, June 2024



Mentoring youth for future success



Derrick Hastings and elders who work at the farm spend time with vulnerable youth, mentor them, and teach some real life skills they can take forward in their lives.

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“We’ve offered up the farm where they can be working and learning, be outdoors, and keep active.”

Derrick Hastings

Each year, TH Farm employs students to teach them skills they need to grow food and be productive in life.

When Covid19 shut down most recreational activities and, at times, schools, Hastings says the farm was a real lifeline in the community.
(farmforum.ca)



“I see in the future this really being a way for the youth to establish themselves early in life between 12 and 18, and establish important skill sets and the understanding of agriculture and a different work ethic. (It can act as) a preventative measure to a lot of the problems facing the First Nations.”

Derrick Hastings

Plans for the future - education and enterprise

The farm has big plans to host more workshops in canning, butchering, horticulture, and value-added meat processing. Also incorporated in the design of the greenhouse is a storefront that will sell the farm's products year-round.

Additionally, TH Farm is looking at expanding into different areas such as horse and cattle farming, and the possibility of creating different sites for training and commercial production.

Recently, TH Farm has received a grant to purchase meat processing equipment, and has procured a refrigerated van so that they can start extending their reach with deliveries.



Photo by Chris MacIntyre for CBC

Mähsi cho!

The Arctic Inspiration Prize was matched by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs' Climate Change Preparedness in the North Program contributing additional \$500,000 to the project.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation has invested \$150,000 in the project to date.

