

Sea Cider

Farm & Ciderhouse



While the award-winning apple and fruit ciders produced by Sea Cider are popular with local crowds, they're increasingly showing up in stores and restaurants in Vancouver and throughout the Pacific Northwest to meet the growing demand for top-quality craft beverages. The company has risen to the challenge by organizing a sophisticated logistics system that efficiently delivers its range of 18 freshly brewed products to thirsty customers.

Operations

Sea Cider produces over 7,000 cases of traditionally fermented cider annually on a 10-acre farm with 1,300 heritage apple trees, a cider house, restaurant and event venue, as well as wholesale and retail sales.

Year founded 2004

Primary Market Local, Western Canada and Western North America

Employees 30 full-time (up to 50 during summer season)

Q&A

Kristen Needham | Owner

www.seacider.ca

What's happening in the agri-foods marketplace?

I think what you're seeing is more and more specialization and boutique branding. So moving away from agri-commodities in to more kind of branded consumer value-added products. I think there's more growth potential in that market.

How do the logistics work with large urban markets like Vancouver?

It's pretty seamless. When we send a shipment from our farm on Friday, it will be heading in to Vancouver liquor stores on a Tuesday. The systems are all automated, so much is online, that it makes it easy to manage inventory, whether it's in Victoria or Vancouver.

“Don't be intimidated by being on an island. The logistics are easily solved.”

Kristen Needham

Does local government support your business?

One of the things that attracted us here was the fact that the municipality has an official community plan with an emphasis on the ag sector. So, for example, if it wasn't a priority, I wouldn't have been able to get an agri-waterline put in to get proper irrigation to my orchard.

Is the local labour force meeting your needs?

We haven't had difficulty finding staff, from the junior level up to senior management. We've been able to recruit from universities and colleges locally, from UVic, Camosun and Royal Roads, and further afield. I love the fact the local colleges and universities have co-op programs and are very active in trying to place their students. They really encourage that connection with private enterprise.

What would you say to business owners considering the region?

From the production side, we have some of the best growing conditions in Canada. From the market side, the Island itself is a big market, bigger than Vancouver for us. But in terms of access to other markets, the ferry hasn't been an issue. There are lots of ferries and warehousing and the logistics works really well, even though we're on an island.

