

## **Shiela Alexandrovich**

Lorne Mountain

### **That Simple.**

As a long time Yukon food producer, I signed on to the LOOP program about 5 years ago. It took 'waste' from grocery stores, and a different farmer would pick up all that the store was sending to the landfill each day. Dairy, bread, vegetables, meat and fish, flowers, processed food. There were enough farmers signed up that my turn would come once every 2 weeks.

I bought a trailer, and added a hitch to my mini van. On the first pickup day for me, I invited my pig raising neighbour along, as I was unsure of how much there was. A truck, a trailer and a minivan full. Live lobsters, organic butter, cases of yoghurt by the mini cup. Wild caught sockeye salmon; eight plastic trays of it, not expired. I lasted less than two months, totally disgusted by the volume from one day, at one store. And the store gets a green star.

The day I quit, the store manager helping me load told me they loved LOOP, as they didn't need to deal with any of it, anymore. I was hauling it an hour out of Whitehorse, washing tiny plastic hummus containers, that came six to a pack, in another plastic tray, sealed with more plastic. Then I hauled bags and bags of garbage to our local dump, to be hauled back to town. And a ton of boxes. All which had been shipped from some factory, to some farm or another factory, then shipped here. To be hauled some more, and then thrown out.

And a good portion of the 'food' was too unhealthy to feed to my animals. I didn't want it in my compost, and some of it even refused to burn.

I talked to LOOP management, and they did understand. They were trying to get less waste in the system, from working within. But.

If we piled the waste from one day from our grocery stores in a pile, we would block the Alaskan Highway solid. We could cut down 40-50% of our food footprint by not wasting. That simple.

And every time someone buys vegetables from me, or any other local producer, all that hauling to and fro of boxes, bags, clamshell packs, plastic wrap, case liners...and the food...well, it doesn't happen. That simple.