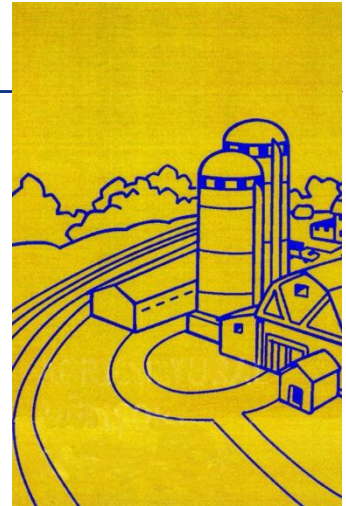


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# Agricultural Advisory Committee Regional Workshops

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*Workshop I, February 11, 2009*  
*Workshop II, February 18, 2009*  
*Workshop III, March 12, 2009*



## Summary of Proceedings

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## **A. Introduction**

### **A.1 Regional Workshops Convene on Regional Issues and to Share Ideas**

Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) play an important role in helping to connect local governments with their farm and ranch communities. Throughout B.C., municipal AACs have been in place for several years and others have been appointed more recently. There is an interest and a need to share issues and ideas amongst the AACs.

In February 2003, 2005, and 2007, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL) organized a biennial, provincial AAC workshop. The workshops were a success and participants expressed interest in continuing such sessions on a biennial basis. In early 2009, there were three regional AAC workshops held to better facilitate attendance and reduce travel costs. Workshops were held on February 11<sup>th</sup> in Nanaimo, February 18<sup>th</sup> in Langley, and March 12<sup>th</sup> in Kelowna.

The overall objective of the workshops was to enable participants to take away ideas and information that would help them provide effective advice and support to their local councils and boards.

### **A.2 Agricultural Advisory Committees in British Columbia**

With recent heightened awareness of local food and food security, many communities are recognizing the importance of ensuring that agriculture finds a place on local planning agendas. The appointment of Agricultural Advisory Committees by municipal councils and regional district boards is proving to be an effective way for local decision makers to connect with their farm and ranch communities.

When the first AAC workshop was held in 2003, there were 19 AACs. As of January 2009, there were 37 AACs in B.C. - 36 Agricultural and 1 Aquaculture Advisory Committees. The 37 AACs serve 36 local governments across B.C.; 16 AAC's serve regional governments and 21 serve municipalities, cities, or a Gulf Islands Trust Committee. In total at the three 2009 regional workshops, 27 AACs were represented. A list of AAC Workshop participants is provided at the end of the notes for each regional workshop.

### **A.3 Provincial Common Themes and Specific Regional Issues**

The agendas for the three regional workshops were compiled by asking several AACs what issues they felt were timely and pertinent for the 2009 AAC workshops. The issues/topics that were most commonly suggested by the individual AACs were compiled to make up the agenda for each specific workshop. There were common presentations and discussion themes for each regional workshop as well as some topics with a regional flair.

The common presentations included an overview of how the B.C. Farm Assessment process works by Lorraine Gilbert of B.C. Assessment Authority at both the Lower Mainland/Central Coast and Vancouver Island /Gulf Islands /Powell River workshops.

The issue of “home plate” policy was discussed at both the Lower Mainland/Central Coast Regions workshop, where staff from four municipalities presented their experiences developing and implementing a home plate bylaw, and the Okanagan workshop. “Home plate” policy is a

topic that is becoming common in the Okanagan, so staff from the City of Abbotsford and the Corporation of Delta presented their experiences and lessons learned to the Okanagan AACs.

Provincial regulations and guidelines with respect to farming in B.C. were discussed at the Nanaimo workshop where representatives from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB), and BCMAL as well as the Municipality of North Cowichan gave presentations about their respective legislative authority and guidelines. At the Langley workshop, the *Farm Practices Protection Act (FPPA)* was discussed by BCMAL, FIRB and ALC staff with respect to each agency's role in administering and interactions with this important piece of legislation.

Common small group discussion topics included 'Public Education and Awareness' which was discussed at all three workshops and is reflective of the common focus of AACs around the province. 'Implementation and Focus of Agricultural Area Plans' and 'Strategies to Increase Actively Farmed Land and Limit Non-Farm Uses' were discussed at both the Vancouver Island / Gulf Island / Powell River and Lower Mainland/Central Coast workshops. Key themes from small group discussions are laid out in detail further in the proceedings for each workshop.

The agendas for each workshop are outlined in the subsequent sections of this report where the proceedings for each workshop are discussed in more detail.



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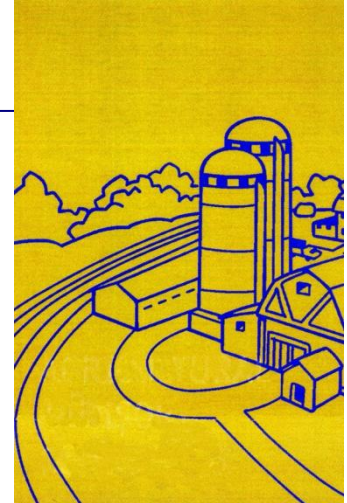
# Agricultural Advisory Committee

## Regional Workshops

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### *Workshop I, February 11, 2009*

### **Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands, & Powell River** **Held in Nanaimo, British Columbia**



#### **I.1.A. General Attendance**

The first regional workshop was held on February 11, 2009 in the Beban Social Centre at Beban Park in Nanaimo. Fourteen AAC's, local government staff, and councillors and directors were invited including:

- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District ✓
- Capital Regional District, Juan de Fuca electoral area ✓
- Comox Valley Regional District ✓
- City of Courtenay ✓
- Islands Trust, Salt Spring Island ✓
- City of Langford
- District of Metchosin
- Regional District of Mount Waddington ✓
- Regional District of Nanaimo ✓
- District of North Cowichan ✓
- Regional District of North Saanich ✓
- Peninsula Agricultural Commission (District of Saanich,  
Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Town of Sidney) ✓
- Strathcona Regional District, and
- Powell River Regional District. ✓

The workshop had 55 participants including AAC members and local politicians and staff representing the communities shown with a check mark (✓) in the above list. Ten of the 14 AACs on Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and Powell River were represented. Also present were the resource people and staffs of the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL), the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB).

A list of participants is provided at the end of the notes of this workshop.

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### **I.1.B Workshop Outline**

Welcome & Introductions - Bert van Daltsen, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

#### **Presentations**

##### **A. Different Approaches of Plans and AACs to Agriculture and Aquaculture Development:**

1. Comox Valley Economic Development Society: John Watson
2. Salt Spring Island “A Consultant’s Perspective”: Derek Masselink
3. Aquaculture in the Regional District of Mount Waddington: Stan McLennan, Port Hardy Councillor

##### **B. Provincial Regulation & Guidelines:**

###### **Provincial View:**

1. Agricultural Land Commission, Terra Kaethler and Roger Cheetham
2. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Jim LeMaistre
3. Farm Industry Review Board, Melanie Sommerville

###### **Incorporation of Provincial Regulations and Guidelines into OCPs and Zoning Bylaws**

4. Municipality of North Cowichan, Chris Hall, Director of Planning

##### **C. Farm Assessment 101: How B.C. Farm Assessment Works**

Lorraine Gilbert, B.C. Assessment Authority

#### **Small Group Discussions - Information Sharing**

In the later part of the morning and for the afternoon, participants were divided into small discussion groups to address the following topics:

1. Strategies to Increase Actively Farmed Land and Limit Non-Farm Uses
2. Public Education and Agricultural Awareness Opportunities
3. Implementation and Focus of Agricultural Area Plans: What Has Worked, and What Hasn’t

**Closing Remarks** - Bert van Daltsen, Manager of the Strengthening Farming Program, BCMAL.

### **I.1.C Welcome & Introductions**

Bert van Daltsen, Manager of the Strengthening farming Program, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands welcomed the participants and speakers and reviewed the agenda for the day. He noted that there would be three discussion topics on which everyone is encouraged to share ideas and methods for their AACs.

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## I.2 Presentations

Presentations were made on three topics thought to be of interest to the Vancouver Island / Gulf Islands / Powell River AACs.

### I.2.A. Different Approaches of Plans and AACs to Agriculture and Aquaculture Development

Three presentations were made by:

1. John Watson, Comox Valley Economic Development Society
2. Derek Masselink, Masselink Environmental Design
3. Stan McLennan, Port Hardy Councillor

#### I.2.A.1 Comox Valley Agriculture Area Plan

John Watson, Comox Valley Economic Development Society

*John is the Executive Director of Comox Valley Economic Development Society (CVEDS), a society whose membership includes the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association, two agricultural groups, and a BCMAL regional Agriologist. CVEDS was an observer of the Agriculture Area Planning (AAP) process when it started in 2002. He has been working with the farmers market and farmers institute on a number of projects, all designed to improve the opportunities for farmers on the north Island.*

The Comox Valley agriculture plan was an intensive process done in about 2002. At the time, the Economic Development office was not focussed on agriculture; we probably did not have a sense of the importance to the economy. The plan was pretty spectacular, with lots of input, and covered off just about everything to do with agriculture. The plan contains an awful lot of items, with many agencies identified for action, but perhaps a bit too much.

Each of the groups in the valley have taken a piece of the plan and incorporated it into what they are doing. That is what made it successful - groups their using own budgets and volunteer energy to do a portion. It is what will be necessary for other plans, unless funded well by government.

CVEDS had its own exhaustive, analytical process to look at all sectors, measured against socio-economic benchmarks. The result was that agriculture kept rising to the top. From a business perspective, we looked at what might be the Valley's compelling competitive advantage. It became obvious that the Valley has available farm land; farms currently only use about one-third of the ALR, and some farms could be more productive. We need to design initiatives that will increase production.

CVEDS has worked with the Farmers Market and Farmers Institute to increase on-farm sales - now have 60 to 75 farms that are selling direct. We continually work with those farms to increase production and sales. Key thing is to find farmers who really want to increase sales. We have created a couple of branding programs and marketing programs to suggest to the external market that the Comox Valley is about agriculture, and have had some success. Agriculture is now top of mind. Through a partnership of community organisations and leaders, there is now widespread support for agriculture. Getting people on board is as critical as the plan itself.

A new initiative is to try to establish a permanent farmers market site, with proper services, to be open daily. A few hours of sales per week is not enough to sustain farm incomes. Five or six years ago, people would have been opposed, saying the farms could not produce enough product. Now, there is significant support from the industry and government to work together to make something happen.

Some main things for agricultural plan success: don't try to tackle everything, bring together partnerships to act on pieces of the plan; and identify the community's compelling advantage.

### I.2.A.2 The Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan Process: A Consultant's Perspective

Derek Masselink, principal of Masselink Environmental Design

*Trained as both an ecologist and landscape architect, Derek has over 15 years of experience in developing, integrating and promoting an ecological approach in the field of landscape design, planning, and management. He is a Professional Agrologist, Landscape Architect, and is an elected Trustee with Islands Trust representing North Pender Island where he and his family live, work, and farm.*

The agricultural planning process allows a community to consider its agricultural situation in order to identify issues affecting farming, opportunities and strengths and determine the way forward. The Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan (SSI AFP) process began in 2006 lead by the Salt Spring Island Farmers Institute and the Island Natural Growers.

An Agricultural Land Use Inventory, Statistics Canada Census of Agricultural data, and other reports and research provided some understanding of island agriculture.

Public consultation guided development of the plan. The first community dialogue identified farming and food issues the plan should address. The second dialogue devised opportunities that responded to the issues. The third dialogue created a vision for the plan.

Several months later, the draft plan was reviewed with farmers and a comment form was available for public feedback.

A parallel planning process was under way to revise the Official Community Plan. The committee steering the SSI AFP submitted ideas for the agriculture portion of the OCP.

The key issues tackled by the SSI AFP were:

- Establishing a local authority for agricultural decisions
- Protection and use of agricultural land
- Environmental stewardship
- Local agricultural knowledge and awareness
- Supporting infrastructure and services
- Economic viability
- Food security

The SSI AFP made 22 recommendations, grouped into 7 categories. Key recommendations are:

## Agricultural Context

### SSI specific data:

- 16% of SSI is in the Agricultural Land Reserve
- 2138 ha of land is being actively farmed
- 1479 ha in ALR
- 659 ha outside of ALR
- 40% of farms are less than 4 ha (10 acres)
- 65% of farms less than 4 ha are not being farmed
- In 2006 GFR = \$4,000,000
- 65% of farms have GFR of less than \$10,000
- The average SSI farmers is 55 years old
- Farmland is selling for more than \$60,000/acre



## Guiding Vision

**"That Salt Spring Island becomes a place where agriculture is a strong, vital & productive part of the local economy & is carried out in a manner that promotes & protects a sustainable community"**

### Supporting Principles:

- Protection & use of farmland
- Education & appreciation of agriculture
- Environmental stewardship
- Cooperation
- Self Reliance
- Transparency in addressing agricultural issues



## Mission

**To return agriculture to a place of prominence on Salt Spring Island as a healthy, viable, & culturally supportive endeavor.**

### Central Goals:

- Re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural & economic priority
- Facilitate the growth of associated farming activities
- Encourage the adoption of environmentally & socially considerate farm practices



- An implementation plan was created that was straight-forward, action-oriented, and identified lead agencies, partners, timeline, priorities, resource requirements and funding opportunities.

- Prepare, prepare, prepare - don't rush, do your homework
- Clearly define what you want - vision, goals, etc.
- Identify what your plan "must have" - e.g., farm worker housing, agri-tourism, etc.
- Secure adequate funding
- Involve everyone - use the planning process to successful implementation
- Make it enjoyable!



### **I.2.A.3 Role of Aquaculture in the Regional District of Mount Waddington**

Councillor Stan McLennan, Mount Waddington Aquaculture Advisory Committee

*Stan McLennan is the vice-chair of the Mount Waddington Aquaculture Advisory Committee. A long time resident of Port Hardy, Stan has served as a Port Hardy councillor for 18 years. During this time, he served 13 years on the Regional District of Mount Waddington Board, 5 of these as the Chair.*

Guiding principle of the committee: The concept of sustainability is the foundation. This concept includes both the economic sustainability of the industry and the environmental sustainability of the region and its marine resources and also the social and cultural sustainability of the people in the region.

The intention of the Aquaculture Advisory Committee is to provide for increased communications between local government Directors, the provincial government, First Nation communities, the environmental movement, the aquaculture industry (finfish and shellfish), the tourism sector, the local sports fishery advisory group and the commercial fisheries through information-sharing, issue identification and discussion and increased dialogue between stakeholders.

In such a broad church of diverse interests and variable influences, there can be teething problems of reaching agreement and obtaining full participation, but with some effort and provincial support, this can be made to work to the benefit of all.

The Committee provides an opportunity for communities, First Nations, industry, and local governments to have input in provincial planning through communications with the provincial representative(s) on the committee and to make recommendations, where appropriate, to the Regional District's Economic Development Commission.

The major reason that the committee was created in 2007, with the invaluable assistance of MAL's Clint Collins, was to create an advisory committee for any crown referrals that came to RDMW concerning aquaculture in the Broughton Archipelago or elsewhere within its jurisdiction. Currently, a broader economic development policy is under consideration by the Regional District that would help adjunct committees like the AAC make recommendations. If adopted, all proponents would have to satisfy the following criteria:

1. All relevant Regional District bylaws are respected and acknowledged, irrespective of Provincial policy or legislation.
2. Socioeconomic benefits to the Regional District's communities and workforce have been demonstrably considered by the proponent.
3. Environmental impacts in the adjacent landscape and water bodies have been demonstrably considered by the proponent.
4. Impacts on existing regional infrastructure have been demonstrably considered and discussed with the Regional District and adjacent communities.
5. A demonstrable engagement of all impacted communities to discuss the proposal from an early stage and discuss opportunities.





While Regional Districts continue to have a role in the aquaculture crown referral process - and there is no indication that they will not - an advisory committee along the lines of Agricultural Advisory Committees is seen as desirable for what is a contentious and complex issue. Of course, the committee hasn't seen a single referral in the near two years of existence due to the very difficult political and regulatory situation around the sector in coastal BC. This fact frustrates many members of our committee, many of whom see this sector as one of a very few bright lights of economic hope for small coastal communities.

Dialogue exchange and fact-finding has largely been our task in over last year, an extremely useful activity that has doubtless improved relations in some quarters. MAL, through Dr. Cubitt, have been a fantastic supporter in this regard as have the B.C. Salmon Farmers Association, who hosted a tour of some Broughton fish farm sites for the AAC last September.

Finfish aquaculture naturally takes up most of the committee's time and can be a frustration as it passively observes, on the outside, the private meetings that have been deciding the fate of our jobs, communities and environment. Local government is most certainly not welcome at that table; such discussions are the preserve of the environmental movement, some in industry, the aquaculture working group of the First Nations Leadership Council, the Province and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The Regional District of Mount Waddington - home to the Broughton Archipelago - still awaits the day when the B.C. Pacific Salmon Forum decide they will come to Port McNeill and discuss their work with the communities and their elected representatives.

Finfish aquaculture supports over 300 direct jobs in our region, mainly processing jobs in Port Hardy and significant indirect regional support services. Given that our regional population is under 12,000 you can imagine just how important this sector is to our future. Tourism would not replace this, nor would forestry. On the North Island, we believe in striving for a healthy, mixed economy, not replacing one sector with another.

Shellfish aquaculture is a sector that holds promise for our communities, we know that. However, as the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association will testify, getting people to separate "shellfish" and "finfish" aquaculture in their heads is a challenge that impacts sectoral growth, particularly on the North Island. This is a major obstacle that the AAC needs to tackle head-on in coming years if it is to be effective. Information exchange and the facilitation of some aquaculture meetings or conferences would likely help this situation something the committee is actively looking at. The "broad church" membership of the AAC can also reduce effectiveness and decisiveness in the face of such questions.

Our committee will be meeting for the first time of the year on February 16<sup>th</sup> and there will be much to discuss given recent announcements. By now, those interested in aquaculture will have seen the recommendations of the B.C. Pacific Salmon Forum. They are many and varied, likely requiring much discussion by our committee. The focus of the AAC will likely be on the following:

- Our communities want the industry in future to offer higher value jobs and R&D activities within the rural areas adjacent to the Broughton Archipelago and other fish farm sites within our jurisdiction (as a broad hint, Campbell River, Courtenay and Nanaimo are urban areas that are not in our jurisdiction).
- We want to see decentralized management in the sector and relevant government bodies. Over the years, we have lost too many specialist government and private sector jobs through centralizing corporate tendencies. Our communities need on-site specialists and managers within the expertise and autonomy to better facilitate social and economic development, while effectively monitoring or regulating environmental change. With all due respect, you cannot effectively achieve this from a large office in Nanaimo or anywhere else on the south or mid-island. We don't just need jobs, we need the high-value jobs that facilitate more development within our region and enhance community viability.
- We want to be an active participant in the new cluster of aquaculture initiatives that are evidently coming and ensure that all pilot projects for the Broughton take place where they belong - within the Regional District of Mount Waddington.

In essence, to be an effective committee, we need something to get our teeth into in short order. We've done the hard work of building a committee of disparate interests (largely thanks to the efforts of our previous RD Chair Rod Sherrell), but we need to be more than a bystander in aquaculture to retain our membership's interest, particularly that of interested First Nations.

Website: [www.vancouverislandnorth.ca](http://www.vancouverislandnorth.ca) (go to the aquaculture tab).



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### I.2.B Provincial Regulation & Guidelines

Three presentations were made on farm regulation and guidelines from a provincial perspective including:

1. Terra Kaethler and Roger Cheetham, Agricultural Land Commission
2. Jim LeMaistre, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
3. Melanie Sommerville, Farm Industry Review Board

Followed by a presentation from a municipal perspective:

4. Chris Hall, District of North Cowichan

#### I.2.B.1 Agricultural Land Commission Presentation to AAC Workshop 2009

Terra Kaethler and Roger Cheetham, Agricultural Land Commission

*Terra has worked as a Land Use Planner with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for three years. She is responsible for the management of the application process for the Vancouver Island region. She graduated from the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning with a MA in Planning in 2006, where she focused on planning for urban agriculture, sustainable food systems, and community development.*

*Roger has worked as a Regional Planner with the ALC for 17 years. He has been responsible for advising and representing the Commission on land use planning matters - including growth strategies, OCPs, and land use bylaws - for Vancouver Island and other areas of the province. He has also been involved with several AAC processes including those for the Saanich peninsula, North Cowichan, and the Comox Valley. Prior to immigrating to Canada in 1990, he managed a planning office in South Africa. He has also worked in the United Kingdom where he gained his planning qualification.*

#### Agricultural Land Commission

The Agricultural Land Commission's purpose is to preserve agricultural land and to encourage farm use of agricultural land in collaboration with local governments, first nations, and other communities of interest. The Commission's two major functions are to review applications and to work with local governments on land use planning initiatives.

Roles of various actors in the application process are:

Landowner:

- Determines application type and submits via the local government

Local Government:

- Reviews application and completes local government report
- Refers to AAC and Regional Board or Council
- If authorized, forwards application to ALC for decisions

ALC Review:

- Staff do background research and summary report
- ALC panel meets with applicant on site or holds a public meeting
- Commission makes decision and notifies applicant

### How does the ALC make decisions:



**The Property:**

- Agriculture capability rating
- Agricultural suitability
- Impact on existing or potential agricultural use

**Other Considerations:**

- Regional & community planning objectives
- Local government & AAC recommendations
- Impact on adjacent properties/agricultural use of area
- Alternate locations outside ALR
- Compensatory benefits

ALR in BC

When making decisions about applications affecting use of agricultural land, the Commission considers many factors with the mandate of protecting agriculture in the long term.

The Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation (Section 2) lists two categories of uses - those which a local government can regulate but not prohibit, and those which a local government may prohibit. The Commission has endeavoured to do what it can to encourage agriculture by permitting uses that it considered to be compatible with agriculture and which provided opportunity for additional sources of income.

Permitted Farm Uses (Part 2.2 of Regs.)	Permitted Non-Farm Uses (Part 2.3 of Regs.)
<p>Local government can regulate but not prohibit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farm retail sales to a threshold</li><li>• Winery &amp; cidery subject to conditions / threshold</li><li>• Storage, packing &amp; processing of farm products</li><li>• Temporary/seasonal agri-tourism activities</li><li>• Agro-forestry</li><li>• Equestrian facilities</li><li>• Application of soil amendments &amp; production of compost with conditions</li></ul> <p>ALR in BC</p>	<p>Local government may prohibit these uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agri-tourism accommodation to a threshold</li><li>• 1 secondary suite &amp; 1 manufactured home</li><li>• Home occupation including B &amp; B</li><li>• Temporary sawmill subject to conditions</li><li>• Conservation, passive recreation</li><li>• Pet kennels and breeding facilities</li><li>• Education &amp; research (not schools)</li><li>• Aggregate extraction to conditions</li></ul> <p>ALR in BC</p>

The ALC regulations and policies deal with specific issues related to the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) such as Agri-tourism, second dwellings and housing for farm workers, and fill within the ALR. To address the impact of trails, the ALC also worked with BCMAL to prepare “A Guide for Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas”.

The website of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission is: [www.alc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca) .



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## I.2.B.2 Strengthening Farming Program: Tools for Local Planning for Agriculture

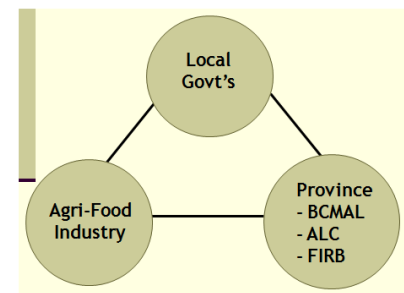
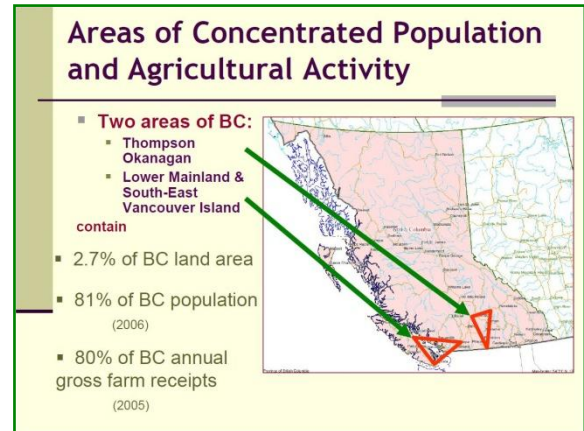
Jim LeMaistre, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Since April 2004, Jim LeMaistre has been a land use planner with the Strengthening Farming Program in the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Before that, he was a municipal planning advisor in Guatemala, the Manager of Community Planning in Delta, B.C., a senior planner with Surrey, B.C., and designer and planner for community projects at the Urban Design Centre in Vancouver.

In 1996, the Strengthening Farming Program was initiated to draw agriculture into local government planning, to address the issues of urban - rural conflict, as well as to encourage bylaws supportive of farming. The program was needed because most of the population lives in two areas of B.C. where most of the farm production occurs, and there were tensions between these two major uses.

At the same time, there was also protection of farming legislation introduced through the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*. That act also established the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) to assist with resolution of complaints about farm practices. The *Local Government Act* and *Land Titles Act* were amended to introduce a planning for agriculture component at the municipal level.

The Strengthening Farming Program uses an agri-team approach that connects farmers, local governments and provincial agencies.



The program's website has many planning resources: various planning guides and standards, publications, and community information. Key amongst them are:

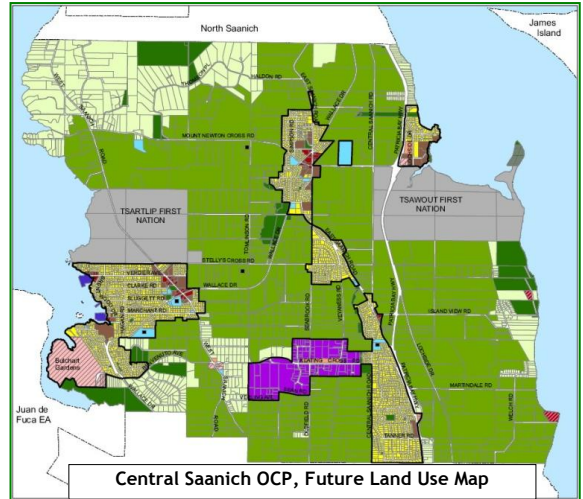
- Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas
- Fact sheets on common farming practices
- Bird control information.

The Strengthening Farming Program produces Land Use Inventories (LUI) which give a geographical picture of how agricultural lands are being used at a given time in a specific local

government area. This LUI can be used for examining local and regional land use patterns, land use changes, and water use planning.

Other tools that local governments can use in planning for agriculture are:

- Regional Growth Strategy - in the form of policies and maps
  - Preserve the ALR
  - Urban containment
  - Infrastructure and servicing - e.g., price of water for farms
  - Economy - primary agriculture, processing and packaging, agri-tourism
- Official Community Plan - policies and maps
  - Preserve the agricultural land base and the farming economy
  - Direct growth to urban settlement areas
  - Agriculture is economic development
  - Consider irrigation water needs
  - Zone industrial land for agro-industrial business
  - Parks and trails respect farms.
- Agricultural area plan -which is a document for local government and farm operators.
  - Provides policies and bylaws supportive of agriculture
  - Can be a business and marketing strategy for farmers.
  - Raises awareness of agriculture
  - Builds community support for farming
  - Identifies opportunities to support and expend farming
  - Resolves limitations for agriculture
  - Promotes land use compatibility at the urban-rural edge
  - Since 1992 (as of February 2009), 24 agriculture strategies and plans have been completed and 16 more are under way or are being considered.
- Zoning and other bylaws
  - Farmer input on agricultural components
  - Allow for flexibility in farm uses to provide for variations in local and world markets
  - Regulations that are fair to farmers.
- Agricultural advisory committees
  - Advise local governments on land use and policy issues
  - Promote awareness of agriculture - e.g., tours
  - Deal with day-to-day and broader issues regarding farming
  - Appointed by the Council or Regional Board - operating under their terms of reference to provide advice
  - As of February 2009, there were 37 AACs across B.C., including one for aquaculture.



- Edge planning - 300 metres on each side of the ALR boundary

- The most significant impacts are felt within this area.
- BCMAL considers the creation of compatibility to be a shared responsibility on both sides of the ALR boundary.
- Allow for the widest possible range of agricultural uses.
- Ensure any regulation of agriculture along the edge is practical and workable.
- Provide certainty of future activities on both sides of the boundary.



Information about the Strengthening Farming Program and resources is available at [www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf).



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### I.2.B.3 British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board: Our role under the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act

Melanie Sommerville, B.C. Farm Industry Review Board

*Melanie Sommerville has been an Issues Management Analyst with BCFIRB for the past 2 years. Based in Victoria, she researches complaints about farm practices and prepares reports for the Board. She has an undergraduate degree in soil science and a Masters in Geography and Environmental Studies. She has worked for over 10 years in agriculture and natural resource management sectors at the provincial, federal, and international levels.*

B.C. Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) has two roles under the Farm Practices Protection Act (FPPA): handling farm practices complaints and farm practice studies.

When handling complaints, BCFIRB's role is to determine whether a farmer is following "normal farm practices". The complaint is dismissed if the practice is considered a normal farm practice, and if not, BCFIRB can order the farmer to cease or modify the practice.

#### ***Farm Practice Complaint Process:***

##### ***1. Complaint filed with BCFIRB***

- o Conference or meeting held between parties to confirm issues*
- o Identification of resources needed, such as Knowledgeable Persons*
- o Settlement options or mediation or resolution by agreement*

##### ***2. Hearing***

##### ***3. Decision***

- 4. Appeal on question of law or jurisdiction may be filed with the Supreme Court.*

BCFIRB defines a "normal farm practices" as a practice that is consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards followed by similar farm businesses. Also, the Lieutenant Governor in Council (i.e., Provincial Cabinet) may prescribe standards.

BCFIRB decisions may consider a wide range of factors, including: proximity of neighbours, use of land, degree of disturbance, and who was there first. The Board aims to balance the interests of farmers and neighbours. Its decisions are site specific. They are enforceable in court.

BCFIRB farm practices studies are conducted at the initiative of BCFIRB, at the request of a local government, or by direction from the Minister. These studies aim to balance interests, and tend to address more general issues or questions about farm practices. The recommendations made by a study are not binding.

More information about BCFIRB may be found on its website [www.firb.gov.bc.ca](http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca) .



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## I.2.C Farm Assessment 101: How B.C. Farm Assessment Works

Lorraine Gilbert, B.C. Assessment Authority

*Lorraine Gilbert is the Senior Appraiser, Assessment & Valuation Services with B.C. Assessment. She holds a professional appraisal designation from the Real Estate Institute of BC. She has worked for B.C. Assessment for 15 years, including 6 years conducting residential and farm assessments in the Peace River assessment area. For 7 years, Lorraine has been B.C. Assessment's provincial farm assessment specialist, located in Victoria.*

The basic requirements for B.C. Assessment Authority farm classification:

- Land is used to grow agricultural products for sale
- Owner must file an application
- If land is rented, file a written lease
- Farm income reporting on request by BCA.

Production and sales requirements:

- Some farm sales every year, minimum requirements met at least every other year
  - Parcels of 1.98 to 9.88 acres: \$2,500
  - Over 9.88 acres: \$2,500 + 5% of land assessed value
  - Under 1.98 acres: \$10,000

What qualifies as farm land?

- At least part of the parcel must be in production
- Farm dwellings, buildings, roadways
- Land that is integral to farm: buffer, setbacks, etc.
- Unused ALR land (file owner certification).

“Unused” land that benefits the farm:

- Land that is not directly farmed (i.e., cropped or grazed by livestock) but provides a special benefit to the farm can qualify as farm, as long as the benefit is evident and reasonable.
- Shelter belts, riparian protection, buffers, ponds, etc.

What qualifies as primary agricultural production?

- Raising of crops or animals for food for human or animal consumption
- Livestock raising, floriculture, horticulture, forage, grain & oilseed production, fruit and vegetable production
- Apiculture, aquaculture, Christmas trees, dairying, herb production, horse rearing, insects, medicinal, hybrid poplar, poultry and egg, turf, seed production, wool, hide, feather or fur production.

**Value-added processing**

- ❖ Cleaning, sorting, grading, packing: Farm building
- ❖ Food processing facility: Business Class
- ❖ Alcoholic beverages: Light Industry Class
- ❖ Qualifying income: value of raw product

BCAssessment reliable, accessible, uniform, respectful 11

Specifically excluded are:

- Production of manufactured derivatives from agricultural raw materials
- Primary agricultural products for domestic consumption on the farm
- Agricultural by-products
- Agricultural services
- Breeding and raising of pets, except horses.



Land uses that do not qualify:

- Most unused land unless it is in the ALR
- Dwelling for non-farmers
- Training and boarding of pet horses.

How is non-qualifying land assessed?

- Classified according to use (residential, commercial, industrial)
- Unused land: according to zoning and OCP

ALR vs. non-ALR land

- Unused land:
  - ALR: owner can file an Owner Certification to qualify the unused land
  - Non-ALR: unused land only qualifies if it has a Highest and Best Use not higher than farming
- Farm leases:
  - ALR: no size restrictions
  - Non-ALR: leased land must be >1.98 acres.

Consequences of having farm class on a parcel are that the land is Class 9 Farm and taxed using the local government tax rates, and it is 50% exempt from School and Other taxes. Farm dwellings are Class 1 residential, and are exempt from Rural General taxes. Farm buildings are also Class 1 Residential, and are exempt up to \$50,000 for School and Municipal General taxes and fully exempt from Rural General taxes. When a rural area is incorporated into a municipality, the rural exemptions are phased out over 5 years.

### Classification of Farm Markets

- ❖ Markets located on the farm qualify as farm buildings if:
  - It sells that farm's products only, or
  - > 50% of products sold are from that farm and zoning allows growing of crops
- ❖ Selling alcoholic beverages or >10% non-farm merchandise: Business class



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Lorraine gave participants a better understanding of how farm classification is achieved and all factors involved with the B.C. Assessment Authority classification process. For more information visit <http://www.bccassessment.bc.ca/>



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### I.2.B.4 Agriculture and Municipal Plans and Bylaws - Municipality of North Cowichan

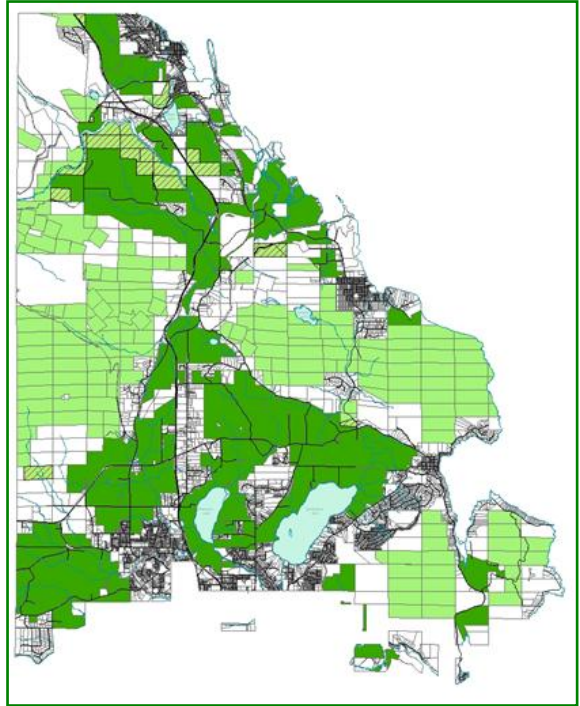
Chris Hall, District of North Cowichan

*Chris Hall is Director of Planning in North Cowichan and was involved in the preparation of the municipality's agriculture area plan.*

Chris Hall talked about the North Cowichan context for agriculture, some of the history and things that still need to change. Of the 196 sq. km. that comprise the municipality, 31% is in the ALR, 26% is Municipal Forest, and 9% is urban.

There had been historic conflict between farmers and business and more recently, it is conflict between urban and rural.

- 1999 Strategic Plan for Agriculture
- 2002 Adopt OCP
  - Rural character
  - Key goals...preserve ALR
- Formation of AAC
  - Tough bunch of farmers
- More comprehensive review of ALR application
  - Respectful AAC-Staff-Council relationship
  - Variable Consistency
- More land in ALR than out
- Greater political support/recognition for agriculture
- Declining residential development in rural areas



#### 2009 OCP Review

- Food Security and Urban Agriculture
- Encouraging productive land use:
  - Intensification...land for lease program
  - Diversification...agri. tourism, farm labour
- Limiting residential intrusion
  - Buffering and setbacks
  - Home plate policy
  - Second residence policy
- Access to water
  - Investigating source and management options

#### Relationships

##### ALR

- staff and commission are very helpful
- key role is regulatory... does not lend itself well to innovation ...i.e., agriculture benefit vs protection of ALR, alternate land tenure options
- reviews of ALR boundaries...

- policy development struggles...i.e., should there be an amenity or offset for land removal (similar to DFO's no net loss)

Ministry

- staff are very helpful...in introducing ideas and concepts
- limited resources

Local Farm Organizations

- supportive but have experienced some frustration with local government

What still needs to happen?

- Alternate land tenure options
- Greater local integration of food system from supplier to consumer
- Agricultural Infrastructure
- Explore opportunities in private forest lands
- Regional focus for agriculture (Cowichan Valley)
- Build on public mood and interest in food



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## I.3 Small Group Discussions

### Purpose:

The intent of the small group discussion sessions was for AAC members to exchange ideas and information they have gained from past experiences. The topics chosen were suggested by various AACs, as matters they have been addressing, or that they foresee as being important.

This information exchange should assist AACs in their future deliberations and enhance the effectiveness of their advisory role to their council or board.

### Initial Discussion Points

To initiate discussion, BCMAL staff had developed a few focus points for each topic. *They are shown in italics at the beginning of each summary.* The group was not restricted to these points, but could define its own important points.

### I.3.A Results of Small Group Discussions

#### I.3.A.1 Topic 1 - Strategies to increase actively-farmed land and limit non-farm uses

Suggested discussion points:

- *Maintaining relations and communications with regional / municipal staff and elected boards / councils*
- *Planning tools like OCP, zoning, smoke control, etc.*
- *Utilities and servicing to assist agriculture – water supply, storm water management*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 1

***Planning in support of agriculture is key:-*** Better, on-going communication between farmers and local governments can help the various governments concentrate on supporting farming. The local planning is key, starting with taking long-term (10-year) planning horizon to protect farm land. Some potential planning actions include: eliminating urban sprawl, discouraging speculation, concentrating or clustering development in growth centres, reducing subdivisions and non-farm uses - such as schools and services in farm land, and zoning which encourages niche farm business, allowances for zoning for temporary or permanent markets, agro-industrial uses like abattoirs and other processing facilities, and for cooperative farms.

***Economic development and regional strategies can support farming:-*** Local governments can work with economic development agencies to encourage new entrants and to entice farmers from elsewhere to move to their areas. Regional coordination, e.g., through the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC), can provide mutual action to lobby senior governments for benefits, expansion of Island agriculture, and sharing of information between nearby Agricultural Advisory Committees. Showing politicians how agriculture creates jobs in the community builds support for continued farming.

***Consider implications of local fiscal policies:-*** Several local government fiscal policy ideas were discussed as ways to make farming attractive or to encourage agricultural production:

reduced income tax for farm income, penalties for not farming, a range of taxes depending on the intensity of agricultural use, and having reasonable taxes that could combine with good rent and longer tenure to make leasing viable. *[Ed.Note: some legislative change may be necessary to give governments such powers.]*

***Farm tours can enhance awareness:-*** The farm industry and AACs can generate interest in active farming and increase public awareness of viability by jointly holding educational tours of farms: participants could include grass-roots groups, local politicians and staff, other farmers, and schools - e.g., Circle Farm Tours, flavour trails.

***Farmers need access to knowledge, too:-*** Some education of existing and new farmers is needed for such things as: organic farming methods, business acumen and planning, and knowledge of provincial and federal regulations. If the need is great enough, an agricultural college may be needed.

***Improve access to land for young farmers:-*** A way to increase actively farmed land is to address the lack of young people entering farming. Affordability and access to land are barriers for new farmers; a suggestion was that government buy farm land and rent it to young people.

***Funding business incentives, at the individual or community level, could include:-*** a government subsidy to buy farm land, the price of land is often a barrier to farm profitability for small farmers. There could be creative financing options for on-farm infrastructure, equipment, and other start-up costs for new farmers. Loan sources like Farm Credit Corporation help make farming viable.

***Expand youth awareness of farming as a career:-*** A communication strategy could build youth awareness about the need for farm succession. There could be more promotion of 4H and programs in elementary and high schools, and even some programs lead by the recreation department. Young people would have to be trained to farm - perhaps as regular students, or through apprenticeships, or perhaps working with mentors.

***Supporting the economic development function of farming*** and its contribution to the local economy can increase active farming. The ED role may include more training on developing business plans which give better understanding of the cost-to-returns and make farming more profitable.

***Increase nearby value-added facilities:-*** Potential would be greater to increase active farming if there were processing and value-added infrastructure available to farmers, perhaps as a co-op or for co-packing. Examples are: centralized egg grading and processing of meat. Leasing of a processing facility or value-added business was suggested.

Some value-added business could be encouraged on farm, perhaps with more education of users. Another way of adding value to a farm operation would be to plant higher value crops.

***Add some marketing options:-*** Active farming could increase with some supportive marketing changes: sell direct to the public with good stories about the farms, to respond to current demand for local products; having a local brand could add market strength; educational and other institutional purchasing could stress buying local or buying B.C. Demand for specific products could be linked to producers who could supply them. Assisting a farm market with

site availability could stabilize the market long-term. Each farmer would evaluate the advantages of direct sales vs. wholesale, and whether the increased value through processing would be worthwhile.

**Examine farm uses:-** Suggestions to promote increased farm use were: allow agriculture-support industries to locate in the ALR and allow non-farm uses that do not undermine the farm. For B.C. Assessment, agroforestry or timber qualify as farm uses, but more categories of “farm use” may be needed, e.g., small wood lots. For properties not being farmed, it would help to survey as to why not.

**Regulations should support farm diversification:-** Over the years, changes to ALC regulations have been good for diversification on small farms. But, we need to ensure that regulations of other agencies do not hinder operations - Highways, Health - and perhaps they could be relaxed for farm buildings. Meat inspection regulations and BSE (mad cow) concerns have created a problem for keeping land in production. For better understanding, create links with federal agencies.

**Enhance farm waste management:-** Waste collection, storage, handling, and disposal should be easier and less costly. Examine composting of processing waste, smoke, fibre (wood) waste, and plastic recycling. In some cases, there is a surcharge for handling costs. Recommendations to local government for collection and storage also need to include other non-agriculture departments. Slaughterhouse waste facilities should be located regionally; the current system [trucking it to Alberta] is a disincentive for agricultural producers.

**Add some supportive regulations:-** There are a few situations where more, better, or simpler regulation is required: providing support on non-ALR land that is farmed but not zoned for agriculture; adding more buffering in subdivisions adjacent to farm land; ensuring a farmer carries liability insurance for agri-tourism; allowing greater flexibility for farm help staying on, or close to, farms; and reduction of building permits for farm purposes.

**Policies should protect farm land and value farming:-** The Agricultural Land Reserve (and if a parallel one existed for aquaculture) was set for specific activities - which are, or relate to, farming. Society should protect the ALR as if it were an approach to parks. It was suggested there be no net loss of ALR land. Society should also value farming and we need new farmers with passion. Recent public interest in making local agriculture viable is leading to change in policies at all levels of government. Some think all policy should be related to food security. One changing trend is toward provision of more public compensation to farms for environmental goods and services. Another policy, the introduction of the carbon tax, should be examined for its relationship with food.

**Provision of utilities should consider agriculture:-** To encourage agriculture, an agriculture focus is required in the planning, design, pricing, quality, maintenance, and management of infrastructure or utilities - storm water or drainage, and water conservation and supply. It was suggested that the issuance of water licences could take a community approach. Drainage plans for rural and upland developments should control the storm water at the source site, perhaps managing it to benefit agriculture, but certainly to avoid flooding farms or farm land. It often will take multiple-agency cooperation to do so.

**New approaches could help land availability:-** A few ideas for ownership or tenure of farm land were discussed:

- Creation of land trusts to purchase, own, manage, operate, and/or lease key farm lands
  - The Land Conservancy (TLC) was an example given;
- Making long-term leases of farm land easier through legislation change; ensure assessment is not affected negatively; ensure the leases give security to farmers;
- Creation of an inventory of farm land available for lease or purchase and a list of potential farmers, a possible example suggested was to establish a Vancouver Island lease pool.

***Manage urban intrusion better:-*** Municipal boundary extensions to include farm land not only fuel speculation of pending urban redevelopment but also they can result in higher taxes in the interim. Some suggested that ALR exclusions be eliminated. There was discussion as to whether changes in allowable lot size, to create a diversity of parcel sizes, would get more people farming. *[Ed. Note: land use inventory data in many B.C. communities show that the smaller the parcel the more likely it is not to be farmed, and most often, the use is residential.]*

To avoid intrusion of non-farm uses into farm land, there should be enforcement of policies regarding houses on farm land: ensure they are for farm help; re-evaluate “farming” definition; consider higher taxes for idle land or land which is not producing food; and limiting the footprint, location, and size of houses (but not 6,000+ sq. ft.).



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### I.3.A.2 Topic 2 - Public education and awareness opportunities

Suggested discussion points:

- *Support of farm tours – e.g., Flavour Trail, Circle Farm Tour*
- *Direct marketing guides*
- *Farmers markets*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 2

***Continue agriculture education in schools:-*** A key direction for public education about agriculture is to liaise with schools and school boards, as “Agriculture in the Classroom” has been doing for years, to develop ideas for it to be part of the curriculum. Especially in high school, agriculture could be a curriculum stream or theme, with efforts like: farm tours, school gardens (grow a salad by graduation), contests, and school meals. Local credit unions may have grants for education programs.

The school buildings and grounds are potential community centres for agriculture - gardens, orchards, fields, or greenhouses. Teaching kids to grow food could cover climate studies, soil science, home practices, and chef training.

***Career and apprenticeship programs support new farmers:-*** Post-secondary career and apprenticeship programs could be developed for new-entrant farmers to learn the business of farming and for general adult education. Vancouver Island University could include such material on its curriculum.

***Senior governments could expand support:-*** There was some feeling that senior levels of government could be providing more support (perhaps funding), promotion, and awareness of the farming industry. Regional groupings of local governments, such as the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) could provide some focus on agriculture.

Suggestions about possible provincial roles included:

- Encourage principal-level discussion around local food buying;
- Adding resources to agriculture education and awareness;
- Tax incentives for local production;
- Education about the ALR;
- Expand the support for urban agriculture;
- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL) should continue its leadership in encouraging AACs and implementation of agriculture plans;
- BCMAL could also advertise in the media about the importance of agriculture re. food security, food quality, and the ecological value of farm land;
- The Province could work with local governments to build the influence of AACs and define roles for BCMAL and ALC staff. Broader funding for AAC efforts would be helpful;
- B.C. Ferries could serve only B.C. produce and beef, perhaps featuring regions on a rotating basis, with distribution of brochures (maybe in partnership with local agencies or groups).

***Use election events to raise farm issues:-*** Participants were cognizant of pending provincial and local elections and suggested education of politicians could occur during the campaigns, via forums, and/or afterwards via farm visits, but tours, and/or meals featuring local foods and wine.

***Educate new politicians about farming's contributions:-*** Education of councils and boards, and the public, about agriculture would be necessary periodically due to turnover. It could cover the economic contribution - taxes, jobs, capital and operating expenditures and it could be part of the local strategic planning.

***Funding and planning are amongst local government roles:-*** For agriculture awareness opportunities, local governments have such roles as: seeking grants and providing matching funding. They can also host committees or commissions (AACs) and agriculture planning processes which can connect staff, politicians, and farmers for awareness building. The awareness methods could include such public methods as notice boards at facilities and local government newsletters.

***Personal communication with politicians helps:-*** The success of building an agriculture orientation for council can depend on the approach, with personal contact by farmers who know the politicians being thought to be the most successful. Making connections to the farm will build knowledge - e.g., agri-tourism, local food, festivals, wine tours, and specialty products. Farm tour visits should be to a variety of farms, including small ones and to sites that would show urban-rural conflict examples. Also important is continuing dialogue and communication between with politicians - letters, office visits, coffee, lunch, and invite them to an AAC event.

***Build relationships with business sectors:-*** An economic development focus on agriculture is important; it can include stronger relationships with the Chamber of Commerce and the tourism sector. It may also include working with marketing boards to encourage local food production.

***AACs have educational role:-*** The expanding number of AACs is a huge plus, offering opportunities to influence local governments and their regional associations. Whether each AAC takes the initiative for awareness activities depends on its terms of reference. A council may set the stage for such outreach by selecting AAC members who are from various geographical parts of the municipality or regional district, are farmers, business people - perhaps retail - or have knowledge of other aspects. Even with continuity on the AAC, all AAC members, not only new ones, could benefit from events such as tours, educational workshops, and public meetings; their decisions could be better informed. AAC meetings themselves could be educational events, perhaps on policy issues.

***Local planning and purchasing roles:-*** Local governments could not only recognise the role of AACs, they could add to public education about agriculture through the Official Community Plan, conduct and implement an agricultural plan, and perhaps participate in institutional purchasing of local products.

***Contact agencies regarding local effects:-*** In addition to public education, some liaison must occur with agencies regarding potential local effects of regulations. An example given was the meat processing regulations created by CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency). Such

regulations can become production barriers for small producers for local production and should be reduced or modified.

***Public awareness about farming could focus on direct sales:-*** both on-farm and at public markets. Variations suggested included: a permanent farmers market under cover, a single retail market serving a number of farms, a common distribution point which receives farmer deliveries and then distributes the products. The latter might be a wholesale or retail cooperative with shared infrastructure. Options considered must be convenient for farmers.

***Promote local products using several methods:-*** The retail sales locations could be promoted through farm guides in local papers, printed directories, billboards, posters, signs, word of mouth, and on Web sites with queries by area or product, with daily updates about what is available at each farm. Promotion of local products could also occur at events (such this workshop), annual fairs or exhibitions and partnerships with local grocery stores, restaurants, and wineries. Supermarkets could be asked to commit to a proportion of their sales being local goods, with in-store signs containing reliable information about the products and the farmers.

***Use specialised branding in promotions:-*** A unified approach amongst the business communities could assist Vancouver Island branding - “Island raised”, “Island product”, “Fresh from the Island”, “Island Farm Fresh” - emphasizing regional distinctiveness. An example for broader consideration is the Comox Valley branding itself as a place to farm. There is a need for shared infrastructure, shared resources, shared information through a farm resource centre, having a common food charter, and better coordination of messages and programs. There is interest reviewing Island-wide agricultural issues, perhaps leading to an agriculture plan for Vancouver Island, with farmers, AACs, and local governments working together. It would take strong leadership and broad-based community involvement for this process to be successful.

***Agri-tourism can promote local farming:-*** through tours (having many direct marketers is best) including self-directed, “flavour trails”, bicycle tours, commodity tours, and shellfish festivals or dinners. A year-round public market with a good location and extended hours will be a tourism draw; there may even be a need to find more suppliers if the demand is high (as is occurring at some weekly markets now).

***The social aspects of agriculture and sustainability can include:-*** raising the profile of farmers, addressing potential shortage of farmers as present ones age, community and rooftop gardens as sources of stronger community spirit and stronger connection to farming and aquaculture; food security - local, fresher, better traceability and quality standards; health authorities’ focus on good nutrition.

***The environmental role in sustainability can include:-*** improving public understanding of farmers as stewards of the land and potential benefits of local food - reduced carbon footprint, plus better quality and taste. Local sustainable energy groups could be linked to farming for mutual benefits. There was some support for the 10-mile diet or at least an Island-wide diet, but other participants thought other supports should be considered first.

***Economic aspects of agriculture and sustainability could include:-*** demonstrating the overall community economic benefits through multipliers at other levels of the economy; high land costs as a potential deterrent to enter farming (perhaps a leasing project between older and younger farmers); and low food prices affecting viability. The real cost of food should be

shown to include environmental costs. Asking why some farms are failing could suggest new directions.

***Energetic people can raise farming's profile:-*** People with a passion can put their energy into agriculture education. They could help get the “non-converted” involved in discussing convenience and cost of local food. By coordinating their energy, they could raise the profile of the farmer as generalist. They could help producer or professional associations be cohesive groups for member education and promotion.

***Resources needed for agriculture planning and education programs include:-*** local government planning staff, provincial funds for agriculture plans and implementation. The availability of these resources should be known before starting a plan. The goals, objectives, understanding what can be done, firm timelines, community buy-in in the form of volunteers to do the work, and who is accountable for the plan and education also need to be known. Then, progress should be monitored.



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### I.3.A.3 Topic 3 - Implementation and focus of agriculture area plans - what has worked, and what hasn't

Suggested discussion points:

- *Who should or could be involved in implementation of agriculture plan recommendations?*
- *What resources do they need? Staff or volunteer time? Funding?*
- *Community and political commitment to food and agriculture development?*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 3

***Broad support contributes to a plan's success:-*** Achieving the political and community will and support for an agriculture plan has had varying success. In some cases, there has been support from council, grocers, tourism industry, institutional representatives, staff and consultants, the public through consultations. Results have been political support to carry out the plan, bringing local bylaws into compliance with provincial regulations, and subsequent policy studies and bylaws such as for water supply and pricing and composting.

On the other hand, aquaculture planning is more challenging because it needs “social licence” to operate Crown tenures. Also, First Nations approvals are necessary for aquaculture operations and competing claims make approval very difficult.

***Awareness of a plan's contents creates support:-*** Public awareness of the contents of the agriculture plan and involvement of the whole community in its preparation can give energy to its implementation. On Salt Spring Island, there were several large newspaper advertisements about the agriculture plan's completion, and a booklet summary of the plan was well received. The plan was also presented at a community dinner prepared by local chefs. Keeping the public updated on a plan's progress is important.

***Keep the agriculture plan's goals achievable:-*** know what you want to get out of the process, refine the concept before the consultation starts, and identify issues to be focussed on. Be sure the consultant knows you expect an implementation plan with identifiable, achievable actions, within a 5-year plan - e.g., print a Growers Guide right away, develop a site for an abattoir over the next 2 years. Committed volunteers and formation of partnerships can assist with the implementation.

***Conciseness aids understanding:-*** For more probability of success, the background data section of an agriculture plan should be short and the number of recommendations should be manageable - not like the case that had more than fifty. If there are too many recommendations, a plan can become divorced from reality. Not all plans have the same opportunity for community building, but those that do, have more long-term support.

***Plan should include all farm land and be kept current:-*** An agriculture plan should cover all agricultural land, both in and out of the ALR. It can inform the OCP and Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) by proposing policies that support farming. An agriculture plan usually has a strong component of agricultural USE. The agriculture plan can identify bylaw changes needed to support farming. Agriculture plans done a few years ago, such as North Cowichan's, could be reviewed before each OCP review.

***Strong, knowledgeable committee aids success:-*** The nature and role of the committee steering the preparation of an agricultural plan can affect its success. Participants recommended there be: a strong chairperson, a majority of local farmers perhaps nominated be the farmers institute or commodity groups, local government representation, BCMAL and / or ALC staff, and recording secretary.

The ***timelines*** of the planning process need to consider other obligations of participants, particularly the farmers' growing seasons.

***An implementation group can follow through:-*** After the plan is finished, the steering committee or a new one assigned to implement the plan should carry out, or coordinate appropriate groups, the plan's recommended actions. For instance, on Salt Spring Island the growers' organizations and residents formed the Agriculture Alliance to lead the plan's implementation. The local government may have an implementation role to amend its bylaws.

One thing that may not work after an ag plan is that an agency - e.g., local government or ALC - does not listen to the plan or advice from the AAC and/or the implementation committee.

***Implementation requires funding:-*** Implementing agriculture plans requires some political will to acquire more funds to support the resulting activities. There should be a budget with items prioritized. Then, funding can be sought project by project - e.g., from Investment Agriculture Foundation. Commitments to infrastructure may be costly; but, other projects like brochures may have a lower cost. There was some feeling too much money had been spent on consultants. But, volunteer time by busy farmers can be hard to find. More public funding is required for implementation.

***A broad mandate can help an AAC follow through:-*** Another short-coming for support for an agriculture plan that was identified was that some local governments' mandates for their AACs are too narrow. AACs' mandates should allow promotion of agriculture and aquaculture.

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#### I.4 Closing Remarks

Bert van Daltsen, Manager, Strengthening Farming Program, BCMAL thanked the speakers for their thorough descriptions of their topics and for showing how analysis and imagination can provide new ways to support local agriculture. He thanked Jim LeMaistre, Land Use Planner, , Wayne Haddow, Regional Agrologist, and Sue Gordon Admin Assistant, BCMAL for coordinating the organizational details, and other BCMAL and ALC staff for assisting the coordinators and for their facilitation of the small discussion groups.

Bert thanked everyone for their wealth of ideas and opinions, and hoped they are taking home some new ideas for their communities. He thanked AAC members for their ongoing contribution of time to their communities for the benefit of agriculture.

He noted the agri-teams of BCMAL and ALC staff will continue to be available to local governments and the Strengthening Farming website is an ongoing information source ([www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf)).



## I.5 Attendees - 2009 AAC Workshop I - Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands, & Powell River

29 AAC members shown in this colour of text

15 Local government representatives shown in this colour of text

10 Provincial government representatives shown in this colour of text

1 Consultants & others shown in this colour of text

55

	First	Surname	Position	Organization
1	Robert	Haynes	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
2	Bill	Thomson	Chair	Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
3	Bronwyn	Sawyer	Junior Planner / Bylaw Enforcement Officer	Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
4	Fiona	Cubitt	Aquaculture and Communities Specialist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
5	Jill	Hatfield	Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
6	Rob	Kline	Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
7	Bruce	Greig	Planner	Central Saanich
8	Chris	Brown	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Comox Valley Regional District
9	Bill	Whittaker	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Comox Valley Regional District
10	David	Page	Chair	Comox Valley Regional District
11	Gerry	McClintock	Committee Member, Farmers' Institute President	Comox Valley Regional District
12	John	Grayson	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Courtenay
13	Sandra	Mark	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Courtenay
14	Louise	Bell	Trustee	Denman Island
15	Teresa	Willman	Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission Member	Juan de Fuca, Capital Regional District
16	Mary Alice	Johnson	AAPC, Vice Chair	Juan de Fuca, Capital Regional District
17	Robert	Byers	Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission Member	Juan de Fuca, Capital Regional District
18	Jim	Gowans	Chair, Agricultural Advisory Planning Commission	Juan de Fuca, Capital Regional District
19	Albert	Benson	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Nanaimo, Regional District of
20	Andrew	Brown	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Nanaimo, Regional District of
21	Craig	Evans	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Nanaimo, Regional District of
22	Joanne	McLeod	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Nanaimo, Regional District of
23	Keith	Reid	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Nanaimo, Regional District of
24	Colin	Springford	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Nanaimo, Regional District of
25	Dianne	Johnstone	City of Nanaimo Director	Nanaimo, Regional District of
26	Joe	Burnett	Electoral Area A Director, AAC Chair	Nanaimo, Regional District of
27	Giselle	Rudischer	Electoral Area B Director	Nanaimo, Regional District of

	<b>First</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>
28	Lou	Biggeman	Electoral Area F Director	Nanaimo, Regional District of
29	Kristy	Marks	Planner, Agricultural Advisory Committee	Nanaimo, Regional District of
30	Chris	Groenendyk	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	North Cowichan
31	Blaine	Hardie	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	North Cowichan
32	David	Wiebe	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	North Cowichan
33	Hamish	Crawford	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	North Saanich
34	Jock	Von Kaldenbergh	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	North Saanich
35	Barbara	Brennan	Chair, AAC	North Saanich
36	Tracy	Olsen	Director of Planning	North Saanich
37	Alice	Finall	Mayor	North Saanich
38	Ivan	Mishchenko	Vice Chair, AAC	North Saanich
39	Bob	Maxwell	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Peninsula Agricultural Commission
40	Don	Turner	Regional Planner	Powell River Regional District
41	George	Laundry	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Salt Spring Island
42	Conrad	Pilon	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Salt Spring Island
43	Tony	Threlfall	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Salt Spring Island
44	Ken	Byron	Chair, AAC	Salt Spring Island
<b>Workshop Resource People</b>				
45	Terra	Kaethler	SPEAKER - Land Use Planner	Agriculture Land Commission
46	Roger	Cheetham	SPEAKER - Regional Planner	Agriculture Land Commission
47	Lorraine	Gilbert	SPEAKER - Senior Appraiser	B.C. Assessment Authority
48	Wayne	Haddow	Organiser - Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
49	Jim	LeMaistre	SPEAKER & Organiser - Land Use Planner	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
50	Bert	van Dalfsen	SPEAKER - Manager, Strengthening Farming Program	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
51	John	Watson	SPEAKER - Executive Director	Comox Economic Development Society
52	Melanie	Sommerville	SPEAKER - Issues Management Analyst	Farm Industry Review Board
53	Stan	McLennan	SPEAKER - Aquaculture Advisory Comm., Port Hardy Councillor	Mount Waddington, Regional District of
54	Chris	Hall	SPEAKER - Director of Planning	North Cowichan
55	Derek	Masselink	SPEAKER - Principal, Masselink Environmental Design	Salt Spring Island

[ End of Workshop I ]

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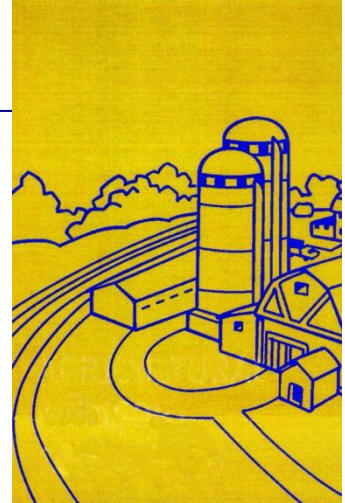
## Agricultural Advisory Committee Regional Workshops

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### *Workshop **II**, February 18, 2009*

#### **Lower Mainland & Central Coast Region**

**Held in Langley, British Columbia**



#### **II.1.A General Attendance**

The second regional workshop was held on February 18, 2009 at the Newlands Golf and Country Club in Langley. A total of 13 AACs, staff, and councillors were invited from:

- City of Abbotsford ✓
- City of Chilliwack ✓
- Corporation of Delta ✓
- Fraser Valley Regional District ✓
- District of Kent ✓
- Township of Langley ✓
- District of Maple Ridge ✓
- Metro Vancouver ✓
- City of Pitt Meadows ✓
- City of Richmond ✓
- Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, Pemberton Valley ✓
- City of Surrey ✓
- Central Coast Regional District, Bella Coola Valley.

The workshop had 73 participants including AAC members and local politicians and staff representing the communities shown with a check mark (✓) in the above list. Twelve of the 13 AACs within the Lower Mainland and Central Coast regions were represented. Also present were the workshop resource people and staffs of the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL), the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB).

A list of participants is provided at the end of the notes of this workshop.

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## II.1.B Workshop Outline

**Welcome & Introductions** - Bert van Daltsen and Leslie MacDonald (facilitator), Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

### **Presentations**

- A. Farm Home Plate: lessons learned from local governments who have tried the concept:
  - 1. City of Abbotsford, Grant Acheson
  - 2. City of Surrey, Preet Heer and Markus Kischnick
  - 3. City of Pitt Meadows, Adrian Kopystynski
  - 4. Corporation of Delta, Susan Elbe
- B. Farm Practices Protection Act: An overview of the legislation and how to strengthen the Act by defining new farm activities:
  - 1. B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Bert van Daltsen
  - 2. Agricultural Land Commission, Tony Pellett and Simone Rivers
  - 3. Farm Industry Review Board, Gino Nasato
- C. Farm Property Assessment 101: How the B.C. Farm Assessment Process Works  
B.C. Assessment Authority, Lorraine Gilbert

### **Small Group Discussions** - Information Sharing

In the later part of the morning and for the afternoon, participants were divided into small discussion groups to address the following topics:

- 1. Strategies to increase actively farmed land and limit non-farm uses
- 2. Implementation and focus of Agriculture Area Plans: What has worked, and what hasn't
- 3. Public education and agricultural awareness opportunities
- 4. Relationship between Agriculture and wildlife agencies: Past cases and how to bridge the gap

**Closing Remarks** - Bert van Daltsen, Manager, Strengthening Farming Program, BCMAL

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## II.1.C Welcome & Introductions

Bert van Daltsen, Manager of the Strengthening Farming Program, BCMAL thanked all of the participants for taking the time to join the session today. He welcomed everybody to this fourth biennial AAC workshop; this is the first year BCMAL has held three regional workshops instead of one province-wide session.

Bert reviewed the agenda for the day (see outline above). He noted that the Sustainable Agriculture Management Branch expects that the day's results will help in deliberations on these issues in the coming year or so.

He introduced Leslie MacDonald, Regional Manager, Coast Region, of BCMAL who was the facilitator for the day.

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## II.2 Presentations

Presentations were made on three topics thought to be of interest to the Lower Mainland and Central Coast Regions.

### II.2.A Farm “Home Plate”: lessons learned from local governments who have tried the concept

Staff from four local governments who were in various stages of testing or implementing a “home plate” concept gave presentations on the experience in their municipality. A homeplate bylaw restricts home size and placement on lots within the ALR with the goal of preserving land for agricultural use, and minimizing the negative impacts of development on neighbouring farms.

#### II.2.A.1 City of Abbotsford Home Plate Policy Proposal

Grant Acheson, City of Abbotsford

*Grant is the Director of Development Services for the City of Abbotsford, and has held this position since 2001. He is a civil engineer and prior to Abbotsford held positions in the City of White Rock as the City Engineer, and at the former Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack as the Engineering Officer. He graduated from the Royal Military College and served five years with the Canadian Armed Forces following graduation. He continues to serve as a reserve force army officer with 39 Combat Engineer Regiment. When not occupied by these, he enjoys running and snowboarding.*

Grant Acheson explained that there is a need for a home plate policy in the City of Abbotsford due to a greater use of ALR lots for residential-only purposes. House sizes are limited in the urban area in Abbotsford, thus the ALR has become the default zone for large estate homes. Furthermore, the siting of residential buildings in the ALR can have a negative impact on the agriculture potential of the lot and neighbouring farmland.

The City of Abbotsford has proposed a home plate policy which is currently being discussed. Consultation has occurred with the AAC, Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Committee, and the Bradner community.

The graphic is titled "Abbotsford Homeplate Proposal" in white text on a dark blue background. Below the title, it lists three main bullet points: "Maximum Homeplate Area", "Setback", and "Maximum Total Floor Area". Each bullet point has sub-points detailing specific limits. At the bottom left is the Abbotsford logo, and at the bottom right is the slogan "city in the country" in a script font.

- **Maximum Homeplate Area**
  - for primary residence 1600 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 650 m<sup>2</sup>
  - Maximum homeplate of 2,250 contiguous m<sup>2</sup>
- **Setback**
  - Homeplate setback no more than 60 m from the front or side road
  - Co-locate replacement and second dwellings with existing
- **Maximum Total Floor Area**
  - For primary residence 800 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 325 m<sup>2</sup>

ABBOTSFORD

city in the country

The proposed policy defines a home plate as: that portion of a lot that includes a principal dwelling, any additional dwelling, and/or any accessory farm residential facilities. It includes residential parking areas, accessory buildings, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc., but it excludes the driveway and septic field.



### Abbotsford Home Plate Proposal

- Maximum Home Plate Area
  - for primary residence 1,600 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 650 m<sup>2</sup>
  - Maximum home plate of 2,250 m<sup>2</sup> contiguous
- Setback
  - Home plate setback no more than 60 m from the front or side road
  - Co-locate replacement and second dwellings with existing
- Maximum Total Floor Area
  - For primary residence 800 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 325 m<sup>2</sup>
- New dwelling to be located within 15m of existing house
  - Share driveway, septic field, etc
- Variance process provides ability to relax setback rules if preferred site does not impact the future agriculture potential of the lot or neighbouring farmland.

In a study that looked at 139 residential building applications in the ALR between 2005 - 2008:

- 96% of primary dwellings met the proposed bylaw for total floor area
- 83% of primary dwellings met the proposed bylaw for home plate area
- 53% of primary dwellings met the proposed bylaw for setbacks (80% within 100 m of the road)
- The majority of secondary dwellings did not meet the proposed home plate area (80%) or setback standards (63%). It is important that the second dwelling comply because it often becomes the principal dwelling.

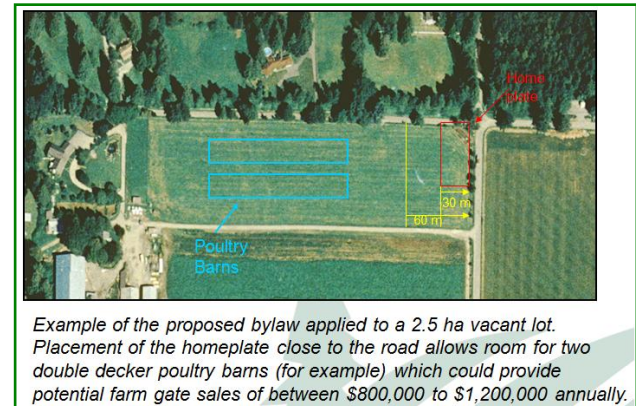
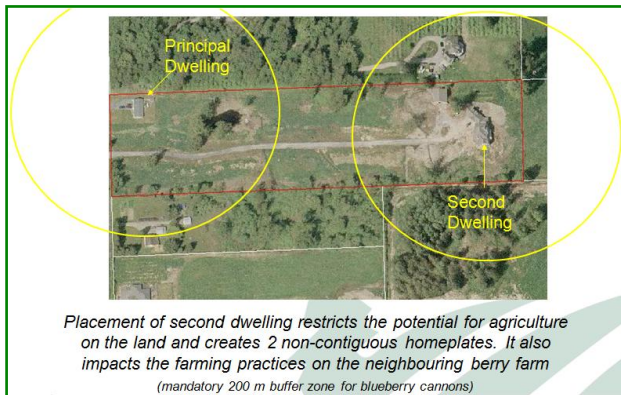
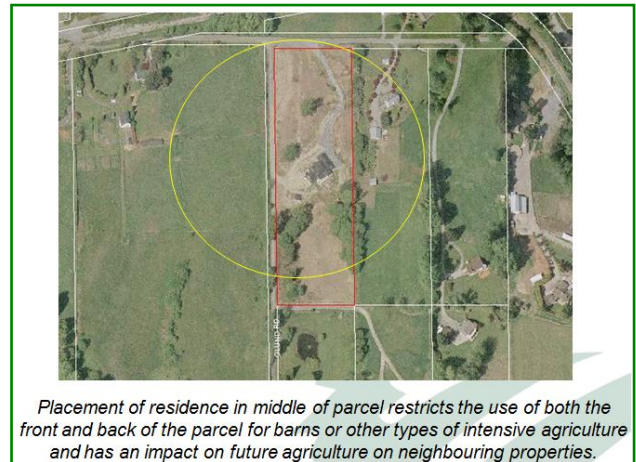
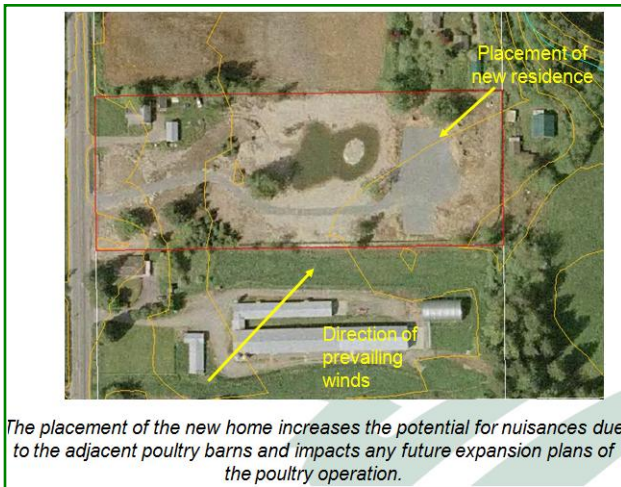
The proposed home plate policy has been met with mixed reviews from Council and the AAC. Council has asked for more consultation with farmers before going forward.

### Examples



*Large homeplate covering a good portion of 4.2 ha A1 zoned parcel*





### Lessons Learned

- Be clear and concise on purpose.
- Ensure you have in-house support before rolling out.
- Create effective messaging.
- Distinguish between preservation land for soil-based farming, and farming.
- Provide method to deal with special cases.



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## II.2.A.2 Farm “Home Plate” & Farm House Size: Lessons Learned - City of Surrey

Preet Heer and Markus Kischnick, City of Surrey

*Preet Heer did her Masters in Planning at UBC. She has been with the City of Surrey for 6 years. She started in development planning and then moved over to policy planning about 3 years ago. Part of her responsibilities include working with the City’s AAC Committee and developing agricultural policy, she also works on developing Neighbourhood Plans throughout Surrey. Her interests include hiking, travelling, and teaching yoga.*

*Markus Kischnick is a relatively new Planning Technician at the City of Surrey in the Long Range Planning & Policy Development Department. His responsibilities mainly focus on the formulation of city-wide and long range planning policies and strategies to guide future community development. Markus is currently providing accessory staff support to the Agricultural Advisory Committee. His educational background focused on Environmental Planning, and Sustainable Resource Management.*

The City of Surrey’s Farm Home Plate (FHP) proposal:

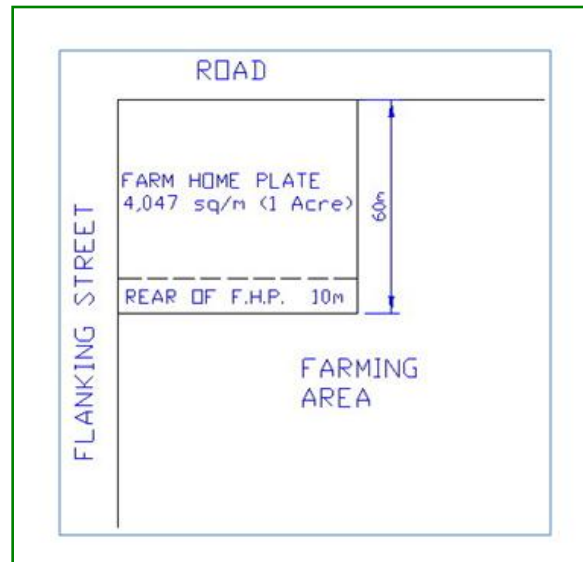
- Considered whether to have a 1 acre or ½ acre farm home plate
- Home plate should be located along a dedicated road
- Building coverage within the home plate is proposed to be 20%
- Possible second dwelling, but not a duplex
- Proposes different maximum house size based on the size of parcel.

The proposal was presented at an open house as well as through a survey. Public consultation determined that 75% of those surveyed were in some disagreement with the concept of a FHP and over 80% disagreed with limiting the maximum home size.

Farm owners/operators indicated the need for large homes for worker and family housing, they have ability to determine the best placement for buildings on their property for a variety of reasons, and more statistical data linking house sizes and location to the loss of farm productivity and farm use.

Further analysis showed (see 2 graphs following):

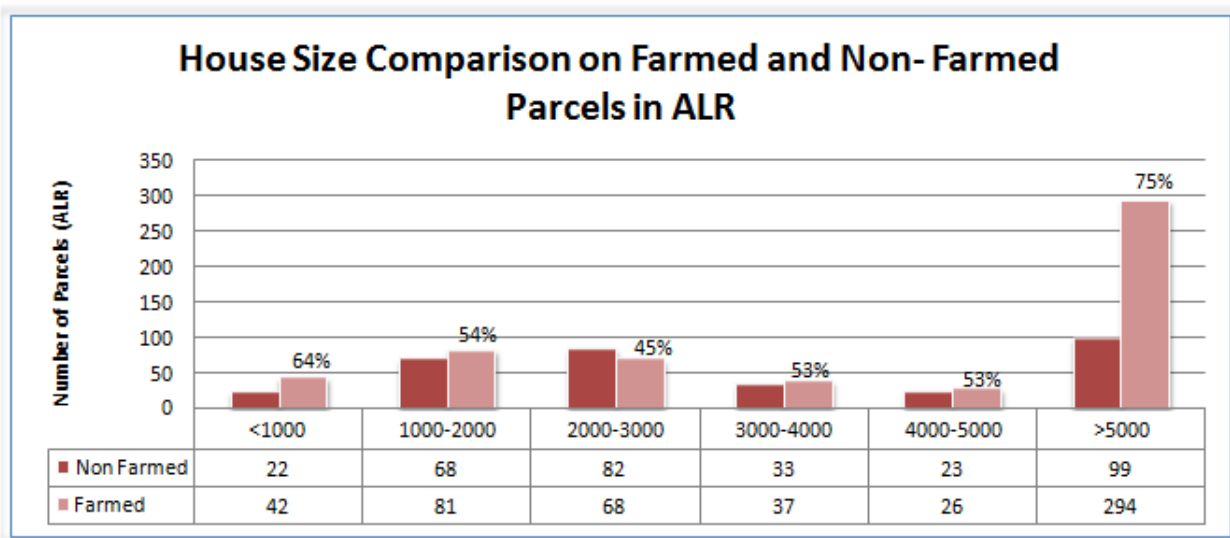
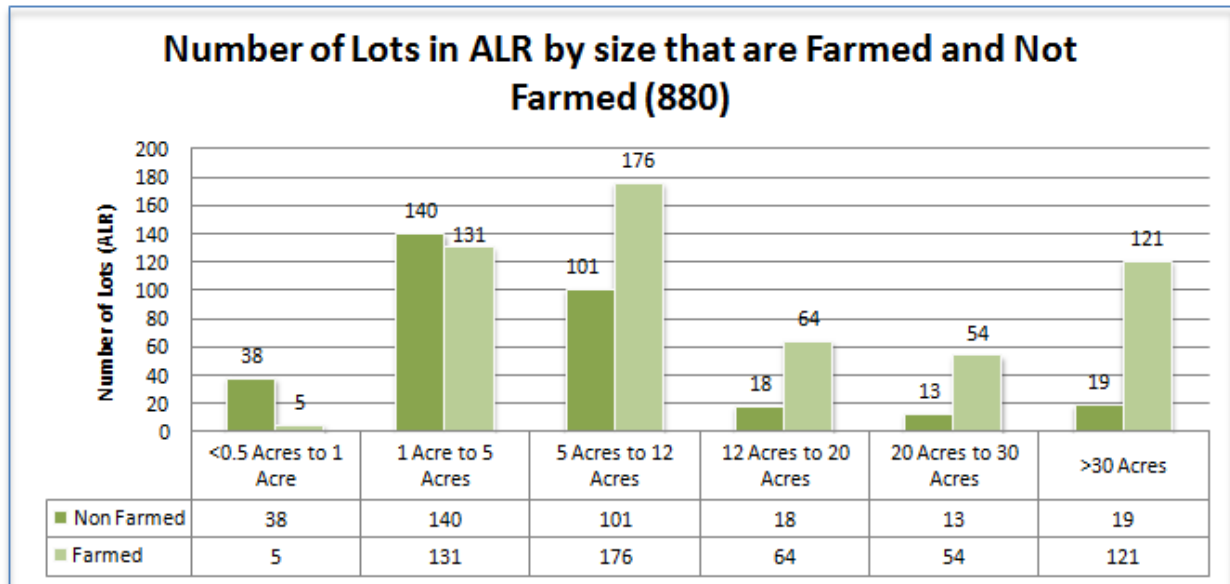
- Lots smaller than 5 or 10 acres have the greatest proportion of non-farm use; while those larger than 10 acres (even with large homes) have the greatest percentage of agricultural use.



### FHP Proposal

LOT SIZE	PROPOSED MAXIMUM HOUSE SIZE
Less than 4 hectares (10 acres)	One dwelling up to 325 m <sup>2</sup> (3,498 ft <sup>2</sup> )
4 hectares to 8 hectares (10-20 acres)	One dwelling up to 465 m <sup>2</sup> (5,005 ft <sup>2</sup> ) or One dwelling up to 325 m <sup>2</sup> (3,498 ft <sup>2</sup> ) and the other up to 177 m <sup>2</sup> (1,905 ft <sup>2</sup> )
More than 8 hectares (20 acres)	One dwelling up to 650 m <sup>2</sup> (6,996 ft <sup>2</sup> ) or One dwelling up to 465 m <sup>2</sup> (5,005 ft <sup>2</sup> ) and the other up to 232 m <sup>2</sup> (2,497 ft <sup>2</sup> ).

- Non-farm use on agricultural property is more prominent on small lots with home size playing less of a factor.



The lessons learned by the City of Surrey throughout the development of their proposed home plate bylaw include:

- There is a limited connection between statistical data and proposed regulations restricting home size and location;
- The present zoning bylaw allows residential as a principal use, so the City has limitations in restricting residential ownership of ALR land;
- Eliminating excessively large homes will not necessarily prevent non-farming families from living in an agricultural area;
- Provisions should only be made to modify the policy if there is a reasonable justification to do so;

- Consider setting a maximum area for footprint size rather than a specific maximum for gross floor area.

The City of Surrey will do additional research and consultation; its AAC and staff will explore other options for the proposed home plate bylaw, and then schedule more public meetings. They wish to ensure that future zoning bylaw amendments consider the unique needs of farm owners or operators and that the home plate bylaw is targeted specifically at non-farming lands and activities.

Some potential options to consider:

- Focus on lots which have a greater proportion of non-farming activities, e.g., lots less than 5 or 10 acres;
- Provide incentives to build vertically to reduce the overall building footprint; at least 70% of ALR lots are in the floodplain and cannot have basements;
- Maintain the status quo while the City, ALC, BCMAL, and other local governments study the effectiveness of farm home plate regulations.



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### II.2.A.3 City of Pitt Meadows Farm Home Plate

Adrian Kopystynski, City of Pitt Meadows

*Adrian Kopystynski is Manager of Development Services, City of Pitt Meadows. Adrian has served in a number of Lower Mainland planning departments and focusing on variety of planning-related fields including policy development, development review, community economic development, social planning and heritage planning.*

In Pitt Meadows, agriculture is the predominant land use; 86% of the total land base is in the ALR and most of it is zoned Agricultural (AG). The proposed Farm Home Plate bylaw was initiated from a recommendation from the Agricultural Plan Steering Committee in 2000.

- In the last ten years, there has been a trend towards larger houses on agricultural land.
- The average size of houses in the agricultural area has increased from 319 m<sup>2</sup> (3,442 ft<sup>2</sup>) in 1997 to 511 m<sup>2</sup> (5,509 ft<sup>2</sup>) in 2007.
- The parcels ranging in size from 2 ha to 4 ha are most attractive for large houses on rural estates.

#### *The 2008 Pitt Meadows OCP says:*


##### *"Policy 4.2.3 Housing in Agricultural Areas*

*Zoning regulations for residential dwellings on agricultural land that establish a building placement envelope at set distances from front and side lot lines and create building height restrictions will be considered. The City will also consider restricting the size of dwelling units."*

The work done to date on developing a home plate bylaw includes a discussion paper produced by the City in consultation with the AAC, which has resulted in a set of proposed regulations:

- Maximum depth of 60 metres (196 feet)
- Fronting or abutting road for vehicular access
- Corner of lots preferred
- Farm Home Plate (FHP) size was proposed as follows:
  - 0.2 ha (0.5 acres), which is equal to the RS Zone lot size, for parcels 5 ha (12.3 acres) and smaller
  - 0.36 ha (0.9 acres) which is about double the RS zone lot size, for parcels larger than 5 ha (12.3 acres)
  - But, the Pitt Meadows AAC recommended just the one larger size (0.36 ha) for all lots - called Option B.
- Maximum House Sizes as follows:
  - For AG zoned lots 5 ha (12.3 acres) and smaller, 600 sq. m. (6,458 sq. ft.);
  - For AG zoned lots over 5 ha (12.3 ac.), 1,080 sq. m. (11,625 sq.ft.).

ALR residents and stakeholders, including the Pitt Meadows Farmers Institute, were invited to a public open house in December 2008 to discuss these proposed regulations. The public

	<h2>Results (3)</h2>
	<p>The main concerns of the public about FHP were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The impact of becoming non-conforming, and using existing foundations and septic systems by replacement residences;</li> <li>■ The impact on house insurance;</li> <li>■ The availability of mortgages;</li> <li>■ A reduction in land values; and</li> <li>■ The impact on the future use of smaller agricultural parcels.</li> </ul>

expressed opposition to the concepts and overall a majority of the participating residents (67.5%) did not support either option for a FHP Bylaw.

The next steps for the FHP Bylaw in Pitt Meadows is to report back to Council on the results of the open house, results of research into insurance, mortgage, and land value issues, and subsequently make recommendations and seek direction from Council on proceeding with a Farm Home Plate bylaw.



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## II.2.A.4 Farm Home Plate Regulations: The Corporation of Delta

Susan Elbe, The Corporation of Delta

*Susan Elbe has been a planner with the Corporation of Delta for 9 years. Her most recent work in developing agricultural policy was to create a bylaw to allow housing for migrant farm workers on farms. She also does work on issues related to waterfront planning and development, development on steep slopes, industrial redevelopment on brownfield sites, and various other development projects.*

The Farm Home Plate regulations have been in place in The Corporation of Delta since May 31, 2006 and were implemented to address a Council concern over construction of large estate homes in the ALR and associated lost productivity on agricultural lands.

The policy specifications are:

Maximum Farm Home Plate Area <sup>2</sup>	Dwelling Type
3,600 m <sup>2</sup>	1 Farm House
5,000 m <sup>2</sup>	1 Farm House & 1 Additional Farm House (must be on same FHP)
1,400 m <sup>2</sup>	Migrant Farm Worker Housing (can be on same or separate FHP)

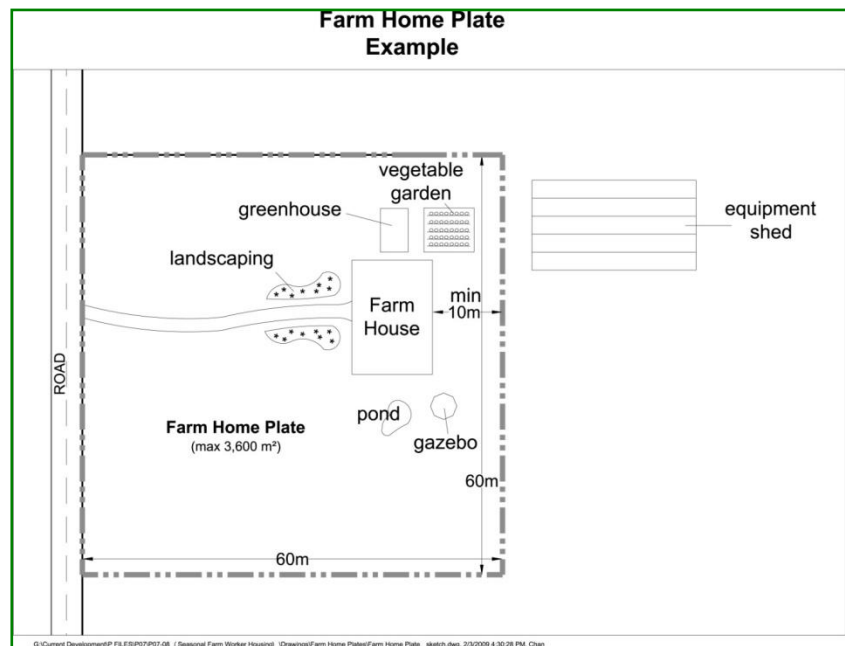
### Maximum Farm Home Plate Depth

60 m from a dedicated OR constructed road; and

100 m where the Farm Home Plate and Migrant Farm Worker Farm Home Plate are adjoining and on the same lot.

An owner can apply for a variance permit for any of the regulations.

The agencies involved in the development of the FHP regulations were: Delta Farmer's Institute, Ministry of Agriculture & Lands, the Corporation of Delta, Agricultural Zoning Task Force, Delta Agricultural Advisory Committee, Delta's Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Development & Environment Advisory Committee. As well, many stakeholders were involved in consultation



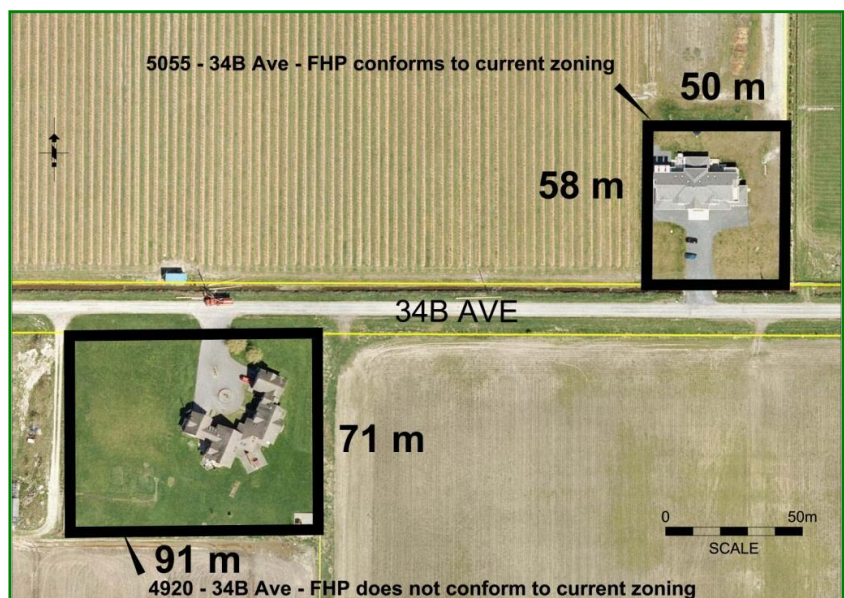
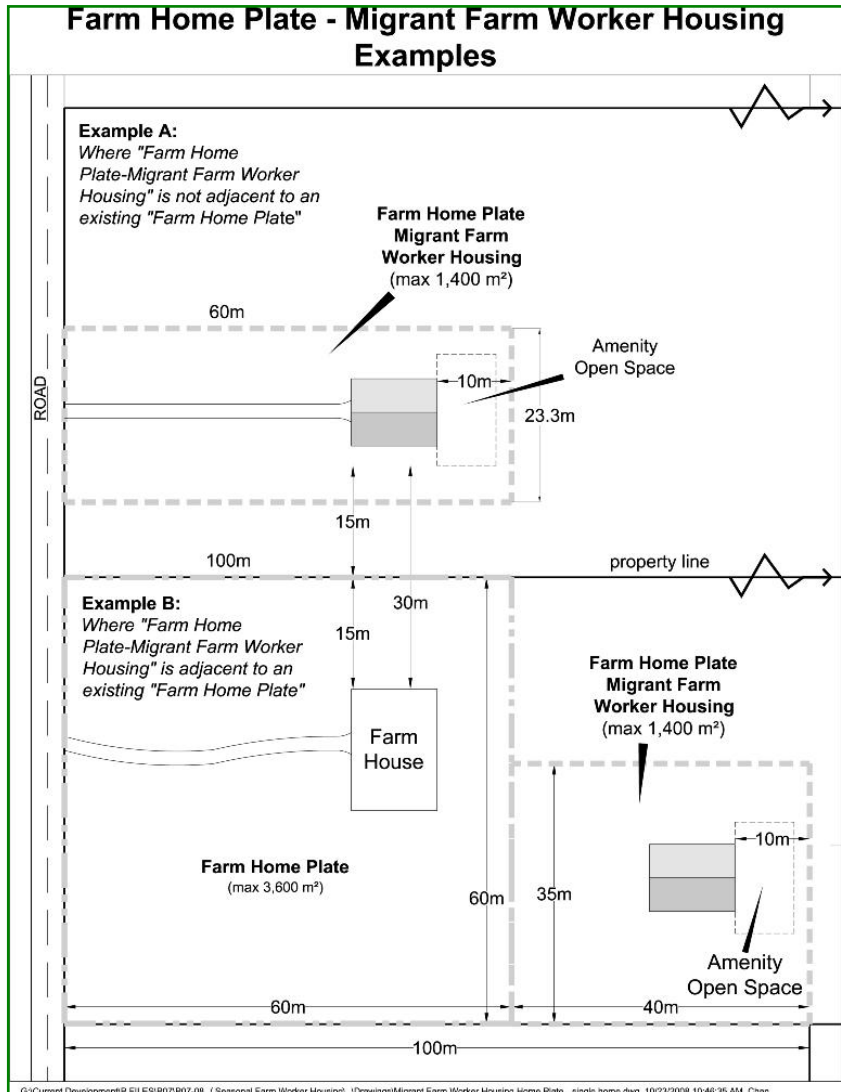
including conservation agencies, agricultural industry associations and local designers and architects.

The successes thus far include the end of large land areas being taken out of production for residential use. There is also a high level of awareness about the new regulations. The average number of houses built on farm land has decreased slightly, but has not stopped. The development variance permit process has worked where effects on farming would be less, or lot shape was awkward

However, the development of a FHP regulation had its challenges. The controversy experienced during the development of the bylaws has created some distrust between the farming community and municipal government. There have been some limitations experienced with the maximum FHP of 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> when combined with the 60 m maximum FHP depth on narrow parcels. There have been misunderstandings about the amount of fill permitted -is not for entire FHP but only the house area and tapered down to ground level.

For municipalities considering developing a FHP bylaw, The Corporation of Delta recommends:

- Consider preparing a FHP policy as part of a larger policy on housing in the ALR to further discourage use





of farm land for “estate” housing.

- Review lot sizes in the municipality to assess how many might not be able to conform to proposed FHP regulations. If the number is high, a two-tiered FHP system which allows different FHP dimensions for smaller or narrower lots could be considered.
- Try to create as few non-conformities as possible while still achieving the goal of preserving farm land.
- Remember that board of variance and development variance permit processes can be used where special circumstances might make it difficult to conform to the FHP.



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## II.2.B. *Farm Practices Protection Act (FPPA)*: an overview of the legislation and how to strengthen the Act by defining new farm activities

Three provincial agencies, BCMAL, ALC, and FIRB, summarized their roles in administering and interaction with the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act (FPPA)*. As a secondary focus, speakers discussed how to define and include new farm practices such as anaerobic digestion in the act in order to keep up with innovation in agriculture and changing practices.

### II.2.B.1 *Farm Practices Protection Act (FPPA)*, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Bert van Dalfsen, Manager, Strengthening Farming Program, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

*Bert van Dalfsen has many years of experience as an engineer with BCMAL, dealing with several regions of B.C. He grew up on the dairy farm that his family still owns and operates in the north Okanagan. He has been Manager of the Strengthening Farming Program since 2004.*

#### Strengthening Farming Program

The Strengthening Farming Program was initiated in 1996 in response to increasing restrictions on farm land and a growing disconnect between the public and farming. At the same time, some key pieces of legislation were initiated: the *FPPA* as a protection for farming and the *Land Titles Act*, *Local Government Act*, and *Agricultural Land Commission Act* were all amended to add a planning element that supports agriculture in B.C.

The *FPPA* protects farm practices from nuisance complaints for designated “farm operations”.

The *Local Government Act* contains sections which address planning for agriculture, including a requirement to refer Official Community Plans to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) for comment prior to adoption. The Act designates the Minister of Agriculture and Lands responsible for use of land for agriculture operations such that:

- Zoning bylaws that restrict or prohibit the farm use of land in farming areas must be approved by the minister responsible for the *FPPA*;
- The minister may establish standards for the guidance of local governments in the preparation of various bylaws affecting agriculture;
- Farm bylaws may be created in order to allow more flexibility in the specific planning standards for agricultural operations (require Minister’s approval);
- A review process for zoning bylaws is enabled and may be required to meet the minister’s standards or modified in a manner agreed to by the minister.

With the ongoing development of new farm uses such as agroforestry and aquaculture, as well as innovation in agricultural technology, work needs to be done to determine how zoning bylaws will address changes.

BCMAL’s role is to create standards for bylaw development in partnership with other agencies such as the ALC, FIRB and B.C. Ministry of Environment. Also, BCMAL continues to work with local governments and the agriculture industry to create effective standards that support agriculture. For more information about the Strengthening Farming Program visit <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/>.

#### Strengthening Farming Program

...working with local governments and agriculture industry to:

- Strengthen farming in a manner that takes into account rural & urban interests;
- Ensure farming’s place in planning processes;
- Ensure farmers and ranchers can continue to operate in the ALR



### II.2.B.2 Provincial Agricultural Land Commission

Tony Pellet, Regional Planner, and Simone Rivers, Land Use Planner, Agricultural Land Commission

*Tony Pellett has been with the ALC since 1990 and is currently the Regional Planner responsible for the South Coast. His planning career started in 1965. He was Planning Director in Columbia-Shuswap Regional District for 9 years. As a consultant, he helped refine the ALR boundary. Tony is a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners.*

*Simone Rivers is the Land Use Planner responsible for handling ALR applications in the Interior and North; she has been with the ALC for 3½ years. She has a Masters in Resource Management and Environmental Studies from UBC.*

#### The Agricultural Land Commission and the FPPA

The *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and FPPA are complementary. The ALC mandate is to preserve agricultural land and to encourage farming on agricultural land. The ALC controls the ALR boundary, non-farm uses, and subdivisions within the ALR. The Commission reviews local governments long range plans as well as zoning bylaws for consistency with the ALC Act.

The ALC does not play a part in administering the FPPA, however the ALC Act makes reference to the FPPA in its definition of “farm use”. But, when determining whether a land use is acceptable in the ALR, ALC staff refer to the FPPA for guidance. Also, when staff prepare reports for the Commission panels, it can be helpful to include FPPA considerations such as past decisions by FIRB and how the proposal will constitute or conflict with normal farm practices.

• “farm use” means an occupation or use of land for farm purposes, including farming of land, plants and animals and any other similar activity designated as farm use by regulation, and includes a farm operation as defined in the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

When an application is received where an agriculture-related use is proposed but not allowed outright in the ALR, the Commission panels will exercise discretion and may establish a set of conditions for the use. For example, the South Coast panel recently had an application for an anaerobic digester. It consulted with BCMAL’s Waste Management Engineer, visited the site, and developed detailed approval criteria to be met in order for the application to go ahead.

For more information about the Agricultural Land Commission visit [www.alc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca).



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### II.2.B.3 British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board: Our Role - Farm Practice Complaints and Farm Practice Studies

Gino Nasato, Farm Industry Review Board

*Gino Nasato has been a case manager at FIRB for almost three years, focussing on farm practice complaint resolution and regulated marketing appeals. His dispute resolution skills are founded on 19 years at Revenue Canada and the Public Service Alliance of Canada.*

The Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) administers the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act (FPPA)*, the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act*, and the *Agricultural Produce Grading Act*. It:

- supervises the eight commodity boards and commissions in the province;
- hears appeals from decisions of the commodity boards and commissions;
- handles agreements for supply-managed commodities;
- hears appeals regarding licences, and
- hears complaints and conducts studies related to farm practices.

#### BCFIRB Complaints Role (FPPA)

- To dismiss a complaint if it is determined that the practice is a “normal farm practice”.
- To order the farmer to cease or modify the practice if it is not a “normal farm practice”.
- To refuse to hear a complaint if it is trivial, frivolous, vexatious, not in good faith or the complainant does not have sufficient personal interest.

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#### ***Farm Practice Complaint Process:***

1. *Complaint filed with BCFIRB*
  - *Conference or meeting held between parties to confirm issues*
  - *Identification of resources needed, such as Knowledgeable Persons*
  - *Settlement options or mediation or resolution by agreement*
2. *Hearing*
3. *Decision*
4. *Appeal on question of law or jurisdiction may be filed with the Supreme Court.*

Any person aggrieved by odour, dust, noise, or other disturbance resulting from a specific farm operation may file complaints.

FIRB determines normal farm practices by whether the practice is a proper and accepted custom as used by similar farms in similar circumstances, by standards prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council (Provincial Cabinet), or includes a practice that makes use of innovative technology. There are no prescribed standards and thus the determination of normal farm practices is an ongoing process.

When FIRB is reviewing a farm practice complaint it may consider many factors including proximity of

neighbours, and density of surrounding houses, the neighbour's use of land, degree of disturbance, and who was there first.

After a decision, if a farm loses protection from the FPPA, it is open to nuisance lawsuits and the complainant can register the judgment at court. It is important to note that FIRB is not an expert on the specific farm practices; however, it is expert in determining what a normal farm practice is. It provides well-reasoned decisions that consider all interests. It tries to limit impact to a particular situation and provide guidance for industry, neighbours, and governments.

For more about the Farm Industry Review Board visit [www.firb.gov.bc.ca](http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca).

## II.2.C Farm Property Assessment 101

Lorraine Gilbert, Senior Appraiser, Assessment & Valuation Services, B.C. Assessment Authority

Lorraine Gilbert presented “Farm Property Assessment 101” to both the Islands & Powell River workshop and the Lower Mainland & Central Coast workshop. Her presentation proceedings are copied here as well as above in the Islands & Powell River workshop section.

*Lorraine Gilbert is the Senior Appraiser, Assessment & Valuation Services with B.C. Assessment. Lorraine holds a professional appraisal designation from the Real Estate Institute of B.C. She has worked for B.C. Assessment for 15 years, including 6 years conducting residential and farm assessments in the Peace River assessment area. For 7 years, Lorraine has been B.C. Assessment’s provincial farm assessment specialist, located in Victoria.*

The basic requirements for B.C. Assessment Authority farm classification:

- Land is used to grow agricultural products for sale
- Owner must file an application
- If land is rented, file a written lease
- Farm income reporting on request by BCA.

Production and sales requirements:

- Some farm sales every year, minimum requirements met at least every other year
  - Parcels of 1.98 to 9.88 acres: \$2,500
  - Over 9.88 acres: \$2,500 + 5% of land assessed value
  - Under 1.98 acres: \$10,000

What qualifies as farm land?

- At least part of the parcel must be in production
- Farm dwellings, buildings, roadways
- Land that is integral to farm: buffer, setbacks, etc.
- Unused ALR land (file owner certification).

“Unused” land that benefits the farm:

- Land that is not directly farmed (i.e., cropped or grazed by livestock) but provides a special benefit to the farm can qualify as farm, as long as the benefit is evident and reasonable.
- Shelter belts, riparian protection, buffers, ponds, etc.

What qualifies as primary agricultural production?

- Raising of crops or animals for food for human or animal consumption
- Livestock raising, floriculture, horticulture, forage, grain & oilseed production, fruit and vegetable production
- Apiculture, aquaculture, Christmas trees, dairying, herb production, horse rearing, insects, medicinal, hybrid poplar, poultry and egg, turf, seed production, wool, hide, feather or fur production.

### Value-added processing

- ❖Cleaning, sorting, grading, packing: Farm building
- ❖Food processing facility: Business Class
- ❖Alcoholic beverages: Light Industry Class
- ❖Qualifying income: value of raw product



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Specifically excluded are:

- Production of manufactured derivatives from agricultural raw materials
- Primary agricultural products for domestic consumption on the farm
- Agricultural by-products
- Agricultural services
- Breeding and raising of pets, except horses.

Land uses that do not qualify:

- Most unused land unless it is in the ALR
- Dwelling for non-farmers
- Training and boarding of pet horses.

How is non-qualifying land assessed?

- Classified according to use (residential, commercial, industrial)
- Unused land: according to zoning and OCP

ALR vs. non-ALR land

- Unused land:
  - ALR: owner can file an Owner Certification to qualify the unused land
  - Non-ALR: unused land only qualifies if it has a Highest and Best Use not higher than farming
- Farm leases:
  - ALR: no size restrictions
  - Non-ALR: leased land must be >1.98 acres.

Consequences of having farm class on a parcel are that the land is Class 9 Farm and taxed using the local government tax rates, and it is 50% exempt from School and Other taxes. Farm dwellings are Class 1 residential, and are exempt from Rural General taxes. Farm buildings are also Class 1 Residential, and are exempt up to \$50,000 for School and Municipal General taxes and fully exempt from Rural General taxes. When a rural area is incorporated into a municipality, the rural exemptions are phased out over 5 years.

### Classification of Farm Markets

❖ Markets located on the farm qualify as farm buildings if:

- It sells that farm's products only, or
- > 50% of products sold are from that farm and zoning allows growing of crops

❖ Selling alcoholic beverages or >10% non-farm merchandise: Business class



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Lorraine gave participants a better understanding of how farm classification is achieved and all factors involved with the B.C. Assessment Authority classification process. For more information visit <http://www.bcassessment.bc.ca/>.



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## II.3 Small Group Discussions

### **Purpose:**

The intent of the small group discussion sessions was for AAC members to exchange ideas and information they have gained from past experiences. The topics chosen were suggested by various AACs, as matters they have been addressing, or that they foresee as being important.

This information exchange should assist AACs in their future deliberations and enhance the effectiveness of their advisory role to their council or board.

### **Initial Discussion Points**

To initiate discussion, BCMAL staff had developed a few focus points for each topic. *They are shown in italics at the beginning of each discussion summary.* The group was not restricted to these points, but could define its own important points.

### II.3.A Results of Discussions Groups

#### II.3.A.1 Topic 1 – Strategies to increase actively-farmed land and limit non-farm uses

Suggested discussion points:

- *Maintaining relations and communications with regional / municipal staff and elected boards / councils*
- *Planning tools like OCP, zoning, smoke control, etc.*
- *Utilities and servicing to assist agriculture – water supply, storm water management*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 1

***An LUI plays important roles in plans:-*** An agricultural land use inventory (LUI) can provide a picture of what farming a community has and it can aid decisions, especially if kept up to date. An LUI, as part of an agricultural area plan, can suggest directions for increasing active farming. The plan's action items should include some short-term, achievable ones for immediate reward and to lead toward longer-term goals. The LUI and plan can be a source of information for individual producers for their business decisions.

***Bylaws support a range of farm types:-*** Key to increasing active farming and limiting non-farm uses is a suite of local bylaws that welcome a wide range of agricultural operations that enhance farm profitability. That suite includes an Official Community Plan (OCP) which has a strong agricultural component, protects ALR land such through a no-net-loss policy, and which shows community determination to stop sprawl and speculation in the ALR by densifying urban areas. (Such densification should make allowance for urban agriculture.)

***The OCP can support sustainable, balanced farming:-*** It can ensure the farm land is clearly labelled as such and not “green zone” or “rural”, or “resource”; it could create an agro-industrial area (not in the ALR) where businesses like food processors could be grouped together; and it could propose edge planning and buffer zones along the ALR boundary. Such



policies to develop in urbanized areas and to support diversified farming would prevent many applications for non-farm uses on farm land.

***DPA protects the edge:-*** Developing a hard edge to the ALR can be done in an OCP through the designation of a development permit area (DPA) for the protection of farming along the non-farm side of the ALR boundary, e.g., Surrey. The DPA might be part of an edge planning process which would address both sides of the ALR boundary and could consider such ideas as: create larger, longer lots adjacent to the ALR, and placing restrictive covenants (or disclosure statements) on properties so that future owners are aware of potential dust, odour, or noise from farms. On the farm side of the ALR boundary, property owners often do not farm because they perceive that would prevent future exclusion, or that small parcels are too small to be farmed.

***Zoning can enhance agriculture:-*** Appropriate zoning of farm land would be consistent with ALC regulations and would recognise the land is for all types of farming and farmers need flexibility to respond to markets. Some zoning allows a wide range of home-based businesses which might be considered non-farm uses and which might be competing with urban businesses. Zoning can also support active farming, for example, by designating a local site for a farmers market.

***Large houses take farm land:-*** Estate housing can make farm land non-viable (taking land out of production, raising land value, or being the source of complaints about farming). The ALR is often the only area where a local government does not limit house size, although some are defining a “farm home plate” to limit the land covered for residential purposes.

***Keep other on-farm housing for farm workers:-*** Other housing, for farm workers, is often debated. It can be needed to keep farms viable, but some communities worry it will become permanent housing for non-farmers. An example given was Delta which allows up to 40 migrant farm workers in mobile homes; there is pressure for permanent housing for more workers; if the land use changes in future, there might be apartments in the ALR. Mobile homes with foundation pads and servicing may not be ‘temporary’. It is possible to tie the housing use to farming through an annual statutory declaration placed on title - making enforcement easier.

***Non-farm uses might be out of place:-*** Non-farm uses can provide additional income and can increase a farm’s viability, but they require more regulation and monitoring. When such uses are proposed, a question should be raised as to whether they could be built in non-agricultural areas. It was suggested that non-farm uses be limited or even decreased. If enforcement of non-farm uses is lax, they will proliferate. Create a co-operative enforcement plan (local + ALC) to address abuses.

***Increase profitability to attract new farmers:-*** The transition from aging producers, who cannot invest in long-term strategies, to young people, requires there be an increase in profitability because the lifestyle is not enough to attract them. Smaller growers need to generate enough revenue to justify the time. Financial support methods could include: Provincial funding support, even for organisations like farmers market associations; connection of consumers with producers; other farm operations like agri-tourism; and project funding by Investment Agriculture Foundation. Periodic off-farm work may be needed to supplement farm income.

**Capital costs can be significant:-** Besides the high cost of land being a constraint on increasing active farming, the capital cost of production quotas and equipment can be significant. There have been cases where farm land has been expropriated for large public projects, and some farmers have found the payments were not enough to replace their operations.

**Market economics can be constraining, too.** There needs to be community perspective and assessment of market dynamics and potential demand for products. To face the power at the retail end, there may need to be an organisation to be a price-setter. Individual farmers could use the demand information to decide how to market products.

**Other constraints on increased active farming relate to:**

- lack of knowledge or interest in farming;
- newly-created small-scale farms needing financial support and an organisation;
- too many small lots in the ALR, with limited farming opportunities, and these parcels often not being available for lease;
- lot configuration and topography;
- issues with flooding (often from upland development);
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada and B.C. Ministry of Environment requirements for riparian setbacks along the edge of watercourses and lakes; and
- Pressure from increasing urban populations.

**Society expects low food prices:-** A large economic factor affecting commercial agriculture is the expectation of generally low food costs in society. Average income is high but people are spending only 10 - 11% of income on food.

**Long-term leasing of land may be an option** which young farmers could afford, as had been done under an old Provincial government program (lease with first right to purchase). Length of tenure should not decrease the land value for the owner.

**Link potential farmers to available land:-** To make it easier to find available land for purchase or lease, there should be a land link to match landowners and potential farmers. This program could operate at a municipal level.

**Small lots might not be farmed:-** Actively farmed land can be affected by subdivision of farm land which can decrease capacity to farm. Since many small lots are not in production, perhaps the “farm home plate” should be smaller to reduce the land value and to free up land for farming. Penalizing small lot owners for not farming was suggested, but because such lots are often held for speculative value not agriculture, there was some question whether they would ever be farmed.

**Limit exclusions to reduce speculation:-** The opinion was that there has been a net decrease in good farm land, with better soils in the south being swapped for poor quality land in the north. Even though Richmond has protected much of its farm land for 20 years, speculation continues. Speculation on ALR land would be decreased if no exclusions were allowed in a region, or if only municipalities, not individuals, could request exclusions. Similarly, zoning change could be done only at the municipal level.

**Senior governments can actively support agriculture:-** There was interest in more support from federal and provincial governments and a note that local governments can allow for agricultural use but cannot require it. The senior governments can help create demand, perhaps provide subsidies as in Europe, set minimum standards for all local governments, assist with the cost of enforcement, provide extension services and research for new industries, provide more supply-management e.g., for vegetables, mandate agriculture education in schools, and re-establish a province-wide ALC instead of regional panels. There was some concern that the provincial role for agriculture is being downloaded to local governments.

**Use tax policies to promote farming:-** Several suggestions regarding farm assessment and taxation included: higher (e.g., residential) assessment rate if ALR land is not farmed; use tax revenue from non-farmed properties to fund advertising or ag awareness activities; give a tax break to farm land that provides “environmental goods and services” (i.e., for its general value to society); not penalize value-added operations in the assessment system; and close the disconnect between ALC’s allowance of up to 50% of non-farm product sales and B.C. Assessment’s 10%.

**Consistent enforcement can reduce non-farm intrusions:-** Creating more consistency of regulations between jurisdictions would assist active farming - e.g., bylaws, health, food safety, and servicing. Enforcement, especially of intrusion of non-farm uses, should be done by ALC of its regulations, and by local governments of their bylaws. Some local bylaw enforcement officers may need additional agricultural expertise to know how operations fit the bylaws.

**Municipalities could support agriculture through efforts such as** green credits for “eat local” activities, urban agriculture in parks, and young farmers’ training like the program at Terra Nova park in Richmond.

**Water management is key for agriculture:-** Active farming can be promoted through efficient storm water planning, ditch maintenance supported by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), ditch water quality monitoring to ensure soil and crop quality is good, studies of aquifers, and municipal water supply with equitable pricing and possibly incentives for efficient water use.

**The strong public interest in farmers markets provides encouragement** for expansion of active farming - community markets, small neighbourhood “pocket markets” and the currently envisioned permanent markets that would be similar to Granville Island, Robson Street markets (in Vancouver). The seasonal, weekly markets provide more of the retail dollar to the producer but sometimes the revenue may not justify the time to go to the market. They also create appreciation of the social value of food and local food’s role in the potential improved health in society and lower carbon footprint.

**Other sales options could be explored:-** Occasionally, the requirement of the ALC (for on-farm sales) and farmers markets to be selling products from one’s own farm is less efficient than selling jointly with other farmers. An option is to set up wholesale produce auctions/markets, especially for mid-sized producers. Another option suggested is to allow sellers at markets to sell on commission. In some cases, selling to traditional grocery stores is the logical option and still means local products are available.

### II.3.A.2 Topic 2 - Implementation and focus of agriculture area plans - what has worked, and what hasn't

Suggested discussion points:

- *Who should or could be involved in implementation of agriculture plan recommendations?*
- *What resources do they need? Staff or volunteer time? Funding?*
- *Is there community and political commitment to food and agriculture development?*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 2

***Community plan policies can support and protect farming:-*** A key success of agriculture plans has been the linkage to land use issues and policies in official community plans. An example given was Surrey where the OCP has a lower density suburban ring around the urban area, a development permit area along the urban side of the ALR boundary - with a vegetation buffer, and restrictive covenants alerting property owners to farming activity nearby. Surrey has a strong bylaw controlling the quality of fill being dumped on farm land and a strong policy regarding ALR exclusions requiring a two-for-one replacement for farm land lost.

***An agriculture plan can contribute policies to the OCP*** and supplement it by giving additional detail, such as for treatment of the rural-urban edge.

***Consult farmers and the public:-*** The public and farmer consultation during the agriculture planning process can identify community issues - such as gravel extraction, drainage, fisheries / riparian, and road and trail routes - and priorities. Plans identify where agriculture can occur (whether in ALR or not), including intensive and non-soil based farming, but the decision about what to grow is up to the land owner. The agriculture plan can be an input into the OCP, giving certainty to long-term farm land use.

***An example of a smaller scale plan*** was given of Colony Farm in Coquitlam, owned by Metro Vancouver. It has an integrated plan prepared with community consultation. This park plan brings farmers in to create market gardens and it proposes 500 allotment garden plots.

***Planning for agriculture builds understanding of the industry:-*** Agriculture plans can capture the current public enthusiasm around food issues. Successful ones have involved farm operators because they have practical knowledge. In some communities, residents were involved, in others, town residents were not interested. Involving people of opposing opinions enables negotiation of directions, although it is hard to please everyone. The process builds awareness of agriculture amongst local staff and politicians helping them to make decisions supportive of agriculture when the council approves the plan. Land use inventories (LUI) paint a good picture of the industry. A few communities have repeated their LUIs in 3 to 5 years (e.g., Surrey) to show trends in farming.

***Lack of support for agriculture planning can present challenges:-*** Concern was expressed that the purpose of an agriculture plan might be to identify lands to be excluded from the ALR, with discussion of the status of class 4 and 5 (and 6 and 7) soils. Sometimes it can be difficult to involve farmers in the planning process if they do not think there are real problems. Even the planning can be discouraging if policy is decided first - e.g., South Fraser Perimeter Road through Delta. There have been challenges finding sufficient funding, and building community

and local staff support for doing a plan. A plan may propose agri-tourism as another on-farm income source but some concern has been expressed that it may take away business from downtown.

***Role of AACs in planning for agriculture can vary:-*** AACs sometimes initiate ag plans, other times they spearhead them, or are simply part of a steering committee containing a mixture of representation.

***AAC membership can relate to the success of a plan:-*** The majority of an AAC should be farmers. Having a council liaison is important for communications to and from the AAC. Cross-representation between committees (e.g., Surrey's environment and agriculture committees) can be mutually beneficial. Having a dedicated local staff person for agriculture planning is a plus. Environmental agencies do not sit on AACs but could be invited on farm tours for improved awareness.

***Surrey's AAC seeks solutions*** and does not say 'no'; it is consulted on edge issues outside of the ALR. Abbotsford consults its AAC for advice on operations.

***There are several common environmental issues related to agriculture planning*** that frequently arise: control of beavers (and their ponds); natural riparian vegetation and ditch cleaning; bird habitats replaced by berries; environmental farm plans for waste management; and effects of laser levelling on scaring away birds.

***Stewardship programs have been successful*** at coordinating both agricultural and conservation goals. Often, these programs create agreements by farmers to limit crop type and/or location for management of wildlife habitat. In Delta, the Greenfields Project brought together farmers and wildlife groups; it evolved into the Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust. In Surrey, S.H.A.R.P (Salmon Habitat And Rehabilitation Program) worked with farmers to do rehab works. The AAC supported SHARP's funding application to Investment Agriculture Foundation. It is lead by drainage engineers and environmental staff. (Having engineers involved means they are aware of farmers needs when undertaking designs.) SHARP also did some farm-awareness signs along local roads.

***Focus on farming as a business:-*** An important aspect of an agriculture plan is a focus on the business of farming. It can mean building support from the local Chamber of Commerce and economic development agency. It can also mean looking at what can support smaller farmers - creation of an association, or developing small processors nearby.



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### II.3.A.3 Topic 3 - Public education and awareness opportunities

Suggested discussion points:

- *Support of farm tours – e.g., Flavour Trail, Circle Farm Tour*
- *Direct marketing guides*
- *Farmers markets*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 3

***New interest in food and farming:-*** Recent public discussion about the 100-Mile Diet and eating local has generated interest in food and farming. Many marketing techniques were discussed:

- Farmers markets - long-term desire in some places for a permanent market,
  - Need a stable location;
  - Frequency of markets, not all farmers can participate;
- Direct from the farm sales;
  - Publish guides;
  - Put directory on Internet;
- Buying club or harvest boxes;
- Connect restaurant chefs and farmers;
- Agricultural fairs.

***Two types of tours are being organised:-*** AACs or other community groups are holding two basic forms of the farm tour: first, by invitation of politicians, staff, business, ALC; and second, self-guided routes open to the public:

- Circle Farm Tour - Kent, a few communities in Fraser Valley
- Taste of Agassiz - dinner of local products held on a farm
- Slow Food Cycle - by bicycle; Agassiz too, Pemberton
- Flavours of Surrey - 3 restaurants featured, families, 275 attended the first year
- Feast of Fields - annual fund-raiser by Farm Folk City Folk, features chefs on a farm.

***Rationalise regulations for marketing:-*** With awareness of farming, various agencies can make more reasonable building codes and various standards used for such operations as on-farm retail, processing, agri-tourism, etc. Included could be liability issues, bio-security when the public is on site, and health regulations for food handling and processing. Regarding health regulations, there was some curiosity as to whether it is necessary for a farm market to be held to the same standard as a large retailer.

***Ensure agriculture is part of the school curriculum:-*** There was considerable agreement that agriculture should be added to school curriculums - both elementary and high school - with associated programs linked to other subjects: e.g.,

- Food grown for culinary classes;
- School- neighbourhood gardens.

Participants acknowledged the extensive work done by “Agriculture in the Classroom”. They suggested partnerships with AACs or farm groups and universities - e.g., University of the Fraser

Valley and CEPCO (Chilliwack Economic Partners Commission). Apprenticeship programs could train for farming careers.

***Producers must build understanding:-*** Farmers themselves need to build connections to enhance agriculture awareness: media and writers, tourism operators, health, jobs, financial institutions, all government levels, food security groups. They may also need to counter views about “factory farming” and “high-rise greenhouses”. They will have to promote understanding of farm practices amongst the urban population and build community support for preservation of land for the agriculture industry.

***Participants felt more government support is necessary for agriculture awareness:*** funding for outreach, extension services, research and development, good data, having a dedicated local agricultural planner, notices on property titles that farming is nearby, support in economic development agencies, and increased taxes on unfarmed land in the ALR.

***Signs, ads, web are important tools:-*** Signs could be used for public awareness about farming: on and off farm; in high-visibility locations, along trails (“you are entering farm land”), at road sides; about the crop types. Other awareness techniques considered were: advertisement about local farms and crops; consumer information about local products for stores, website(s), and mobile units like a greenhouse and mushroom barn for public events.

***Pass on farming skills:-*** To help young farmers, some skills should be passed on: what it takes to grow food; milking demonstrations, cooking and preserving (perhaps in a community kitchen that uses “excess” food from stores), and irrigation needs and water conservation methods. The art of growing could be taught to children in allotment gardens.



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#### II.3.A.4 Topic 4 - Relationship between agriculture and Fisheries and Oceans: past cases and how to bridge the gap

Suggested discussion points:

- *What are some example cases of fisheries regulations affecting farming in your community?*
- *Have Environmental Farm Plans helped farms co-exist with fish habitat?*
- *How can better understanding be created between farming and fisheries?*

#### Summary of key points from discussion groups on Topic 3

***Types of animals and plants for which there are issues for farmers and their crops:***

- Waterfowl - eat low plants and grasses
- Fish and aquatic habitat - limit clearing, water course use
- Starlings and other birds - eat berries and grapes
- Deer and elk - eat low to medium height plants
- Bear - eat fruit
- Beaver - create drainage problems
- Big Horn Sheep - can receive disease from domestic sheep
- Wolf and coyote - take animals and poultry
- Wildlife (nesting) trees, eagles, heron - limit clearing of farm, noise generation.

***Stewardship reviews are likely:-*** If stewardship programs create some habitat on farm land, referrals to the ALC and DFO (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) are likely necessary.

***Understand differing requirements of environment and farming:-*** Overall loss of habitat has focussed pressure on remaining farm land. There is less acceptance of hunting as a method of controlling wildlife. DFO wants to slow down flows in ditches and water courses for better aquatic habitat, while farmers want fast draining of their fields. Some farmers limit ditch depth and efficiency to avoid the ditch becoming fish habitat. DFO and MoE want riparian vegetation along water bodies, while farmers want more area to grow crops. A new use of the ALR, which can limit farm use, is the planting of trees like aspen to gain carbon credits elsewhere in the world.

***Improve understanding of senior government environmental roles:-*** It was felt that DFO does not recognise farmers' problems, although they are considered more flexible than B.C. Ministry of Environment (MoE). It was stated that the Province needs to do a better job of compensation for wildlife damage - perhaps expanding the covered items and raising the levels paid. Farmers and AACs need to understand fisheries regulations, although some feeling was expressed the rules for land clearing are inconsistent and DFO staff have a lot of power. DFO can regulate fish habitat but cannot impose 15 m or 30 m buffers (but relies on local governments to do so.) DFO's enforcement requires that it prove an action has negatively affected fish habitat.

***Consider the potential of EFPs:-*** The Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program has not had a big impact yet. [Ed. Note: EFP is a voluntary program administered by ARDCorp, a subsidiary of the B.C. Agriculture Council.] EFPs provide a good review of current farm uses in relation to federal and provincial environmental legislation. It is simple to use, can overcome some

problems, and can help with DFO - perhaps could be a guide for them. EFPs in the Fraser Valley have less focus on other wildlife (non aquatic) than those in the Interior.

***Riparian regulations might limit farming:-*** Under the Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) of the *Fish Protection Act* (provincial), agricultural areas are exempt and, with few exceptions, local governments exempt agriculture-related development activity. [Ed. Note: Farm building riparian setbacks are being finalized by the Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment. When available, they will provide standard rules that are not arbitrary.] Participants stated that, normally subject to a development permit or zoning setback, riparian areas will be “no touch” zones, although if an associated covenant limits farming within the ALR, the ALC must approve it.

***Ditch maintenance is a challenge:-*** Another challenge for farmers and local governments is ditch maintenance or cleaning, especially if fish have entered the ditch. BCMAL has reference worksheets on ditch maintenance. The local government could develop ditch maintenance criteria, based on BCMAL guidelines. EFP tools can show good environmental practices.

***A stewardship approach might resolve issues:-*** The process to settle environmental requirements can take a long time and there can be conflicting personalities and authorities between agencies. A stewardship approach was suggested - integrate native landscape that would benefit agriculture, wildlife, and fisheries, e.g., encourage feral pollinators. Stewardship programs like DF&WT can have successes for both farmers and wildlife. Ducks Unlimited has had successes too. More stewardship might happen if DFO were more approachable.

***Obtain current information:-*** When dealing with environmental issues, there often is a lack of current, scientifically-valid inventories, classifications, and studies. Some information sharing from and to wildlife agencies may be helpful. Other countries should be researched for environmental-fisheries-land use policies. Some education of the general public about the effects on farmers may be needed.

***AACs can help individual farmers*** by providing access to local government support. So, an AAC could educate farmers as to its availability, its review of projects, and the appropriate documentation to use early in the process.

***Improve communication with and trust in DFO:-*** The AAC could encourage local government staff to develop mutual trust and good working relationships with the agencies with a role in ditch and dyke maintenance. Then, it would be possible to prepare annual maintenance plans for farm ditch cleaning that respect habitats. This improved communication could remove one of the barriers to working with DFO.



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#### II.4 Closing Remarks

Bert van Dalssen, Manager, Strengthening Farming Program, BCMAL thanked the speakers for their thorough descriptions of their topics and for showing how analysis and imagination can provide new ways to support local agriculture. He thanked Leslie MacDonald for her excellent facilitation, Jim LeMaistre, Land Use Planner, BCMAL and Amy Suess, acting Regional Agrologist, for coordinating the organizational details, and other BCMAL and ALC staff for their facilitation of the small discussion groups.

Bert thanked everyone for their wealth of ideas and opinions, and hoped they are taking home some new ideas for their communities. He thanked AAC members for their ongoing contribution of time to their communities for the benefit of agriculture.

He noted the agri-teams of BCMAL and ALC staff will continue to be available to local governments and the Strengthening Farming website is an ongoing information source ([www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf)).



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## II.5 Attendees - 2009 AAC Workshop II - Lower Mainland & Central Coast Regions

**36** AAC members shown in this colour of text

**18** Local government representatives shown in this colour of text

**19** Provincial government representatives shown in this colour of text

**0** Consultants & others shown in this colour of text

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	First	Surname	Position	Organization
1	Brenda	Falk	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Abbotsford
2	Kimberly	Ross	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Abbotsford
3	Dan	Wiebe	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Abbotsford
4	Doug	Edgar	Chair AAC	Abbotsford
5	Ron	Hintsche	Planner	Abbotsford
6	Marcus	Janzen	Vice Chair AAC	Abbotsford
7	Trevor	Murrie	Agrologist	Agricultural Land Commission
8	Gordon	Bednard	Compliance and Enforcement Coordinator	Agricultural Land Commission
9	Thomas	Loo	Compliance and Enforcement Officer	Agricultural Land Commission
10	Ron	MacLeod	Compliance and Enforcement Officer	Agricultural Land Commission
11	Brian	Underhill	Executive Director	Agricultural Land Commission
12	Jennifer	Carson	Land Use Planner	Agricultural Land Commission
13	Ron	Wallace	Land Use Planner	Agricultural Land Commission
14	Mark	Robbins	Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
15	Kim	Sutherland	Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
16	Chris	Zabek	Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
17	Kathleen	Zimmerman	Regional Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
18	Walter	Esan	Chair, Public Awareness Committee	Chilliwack Agricultural Commission
19	Nancy	Chong	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Delta
20	Paul	Van Westendorp	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Delta
21	Lisa	King	Planner	Delta
22	Richard	Desmarteau	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Fraser Valley Regional District
23	Lorne	Webster	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Fraser Valley Regional District
24	Ken	Schwaerzle	Chair & AAC Member	Fraser Valley Regional District
25	Wendy	Bales	Director, Electoral Area "C"	Fraser Valley Regional District
26	Siri	Bertelsen	Manager of Regional Planning	Fraser Valley Regional District

	<b>First</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>
27	Corny	Klop	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Kent
28	Wallace	Mah	CAO	Kent
29	Darcy	Kohuch	Director of Development Services	Kent
30	Robin	Austin	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Langley, Township of
31	Brenda	Crockett	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Langley, Township of
32	Dave	Melnychuk	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Langley, Township of
33	Herb	Schlact	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Langley, Township of
34	Steve	Ferguson	Councillor	Langley, Township of
35	Mel	Kositsky	Councillor	Langley, Township of
36	Leo	Mitrunen	Economic Development Comm. Member	Langley, Township of
37	Lorraine	Bates	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Maple Ridge
38	Christian	Cowley	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Maple Ridge
39	Margaret	Daskis	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Maple Ridge
40	Candace	Gordon	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Maple Ridge
41	Matthew	Laity	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Maple Ridge
42	Linda	King	Councillor, AAC Member	Maple Ridge
43	Lorraine	Bissett	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Metro Vancouver
44	Peter	Elson	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Metro Vancouver
45	Heather	Pritchard	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Metro Vancouver
46	Ginny	Wilson	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Metro Vancouver
47	Harold	Steves	Board Representative on AAC	Metro Vancouver
48	Theresa	Duynstee	Planner	Metro Vancouver
49	Kim	Grout	Chair AAC & Director of Operations and Development Services	Pitt Meadows
50	Zorica	Andjelic	Planner	Pitt Meadows
51	Jose	Sarabia	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Richmond
52	Jordan	Sturdy	Mayor & Village of Pemberton Rep, AAC	Squamish Lillooet Regional District
53	Amica	Antonelli	Planner	Squamish Lillooet Regional District
54	Patrick	Harrison	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Surrey
55	Martin	Hilmer	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Surrey
56	Kultar	Thiara	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Surrey
57	Marvin	Hunt	Councillor, AAC Member	Surrey
58	Remi	Dubé	Engineering Dept.	Surrey
59	Daryl	Arnold	Ag Advisory Comm. Member and Chair	Surrey & Metro Vancouver AACs
60	Mike	Bose	Chair AAC, ALC Panel	Surrey & Metro Vancouver AACs

**Workshop Resource People**

61	Grant	Acheson	SPEAKER - Director, Development Services	Abbotsford
62	Simone	Rivers	SPEAKER - Land Use Planner	Agricultural Land Commission
63	Tony	Pellett	SPEAKER - Regional Planner	Agricultural Land Commission
64	Lorraine	Gilbert	SPEAKER - Senior Appraiser	B.C. Assessment Authority
65	Leslie	MacDonald	FACILITATOR - Regional Manager, Coast	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
66	Jim	LeMaistre	Organiser - Land Use Planner	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
67	Amy	Suess	Organiser - Regional Development Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
68	Bert	Van Dalfsen	SPEAKER - Manager, Strengthening Farming	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
69	Susan	Elbe	SPEAKER - Planner	Delta
70	Gino	Nasato	SPEAKER - Case Manager	Farm Industry Review Board
71	Adrian	Kopystynski	SPEAKER - Manager of Development Services	Pitt Meadows
72	Preet	Heer	SPEAKER - Planner	Surrey
73	Markus	Kischnick	SPEAKER - Planning Technician	Surrey



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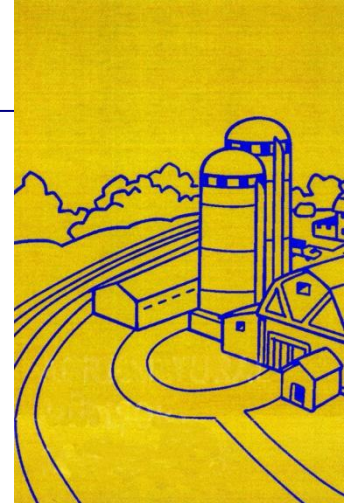
## Agricultural Advisory Committee Regional Workshops

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### *Workshop III, March 12, 2009*

#### **Okanagan and Kootenays Regions**

**Held in Kelowna, British Columbia**



#### **III.1.A. General Attendance**

The third regional workshop was held at the Ramada Inn in Kelowna on March 12, 2009. Eighteen local governments interested in agriculture, some with AACs, in the Okanagan and Kootenays regions were invited from:

- City of Armstrong
- Regional District of Central Okanagan ✓
- District of Coldstream ✓
- Columbia-Shuswap Regional District ✓
- City of Kelowna ✓
- Kootenay Boundary Regional District ✓
- District of Lake Country ✓
- Village of Midway
- Regional District of North Okanagan ✓
- Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen ✓
- District of Peachland ✓
- City of Salmon Arm ✓
- District of Sicamous ✓
- Township of Spallumcheen ✓
- District of Summerland ✓
- Thompson-Nicola Regional District ✓
- City of Vernon ✓
- District of West Kelowna. ✓

The workshop had 66 participants including AAC members and local politicians and staff representing the communities shown with a check mark (✓). Five of the eleven AACs in the Okanagan and Kootenays regions were represented. Also present were the workshop resource people and staffs of the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL), the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB).

A list of participants is provided at the end of the notes of this workshop.

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### III.1.B Workshop Outline

**Welcome & Introductions** - Wray McDonnell, Assistant Director, Sustainable Agriculture Management Branch, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and Stan Combs, Facilitator and Land Use Agrologist, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

#### **Presentations**

- A. Panel Discussion: Experienced Agricultural Advisory Committee members discuss the issues their committees handle
  - 1. Kelowna AAC, Domenic Rampone
  - 2. Regional District of the Central Okanagan AAC, Tony Cetinski
  - 3. Lake Country AAC, Quentin Wyne
  - 4. Lake Country AAC, Al Gatzke
- B. Dealing with ALR Applications: What is the ALC looking for from AACs? Issues include home site severance, subdivision, exclusion, and non-farm uses.
  - 1. Agricultural Land Commission, Brandy Ridout, Land Use Planner and Roger Cheetham, Regional Planner
- C. Home Plates: Local Government Experience
  - 1. The Corporation of Delta, Susan Elbe
  - 2. The City of Abbotsford, Grant Acheson
- D. Housing for Temporary Farm Workers: Bylaw Guidelines developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
  - 1. B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Bert van Dalfsen
- E. Agricultural Area Planning
  - 1. Regional District of Central Okanagan, Keith Duhaime

#### **Small Group Discussions - Information Sharing**

In the later part of the afternoon, participants were divided into small discussion groups to address the following topics:

- 1. Agricultural issues faced with local government politicians
- 2. Public Education and Agriculture Awareness

#### **Closing Remarks**

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### III.1.C. Welcome and Introductions

Facilitator for the session, Stan Combs, BCMAL land use agrologist, introduced staffs from B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL), Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB). He then asked Wray McDonnell, Assistant Director, Sustainable Agriculture Management Branch, BCMAL to introduce the session.

**Wray McDonnell** said this workshop is the third one this year, organised by the Strengthening Farming Program staff. The Strengthening Farming Program supports the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) which has zoned much of British Columbia's best farm land for agriculture in perpetuity. The Program's objective is to allow farmers in B.C. to use that best farm land in ways that support the changing markets, technologies, and input costs and to allow farmers flexibility.

The Program has three primary mechanisms:

- we encourage supportive local government regulatory environment for agriculture;
- we encourage the supportive land use planning for agriculture by local governments;
- we deal with nuisances, or concerns or complaints as we sometimes call them, between farmers and their neighbours.

The first two will only succeed if the Ministry of Agricultural and Lands (BCMAL) can demonstrate how the benefits for farming and our efforts will support local governments. This workshop is part of the collaborative effort between BCMAL and local governments in the southern Interior of B.C. Your attendance today is evidence of the support local governments have found in this program since it started in 1996. We thank you for your partnership in the Strengthening Farming Program.

I am sure you will get value from today's workshop. Previous ones, held in the Lower Mainland at two-year intervals, were well received and there was increasing momentum to work together to support agriculture.

Wray thanked Stan Combs for his 12 years in Strengthening Farming, as he now switches roles in BCMAL to work in another branch.

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### III.2. Presentations

#### III.2.A. Panel Discussion: Experienced Agricultural Advisory Committee members discuss the issues their committees handle

Four committee members who have served their local government's AAC's for many years gave presentations on the types of issues their AAC has dealt with.

##### III.2.A.1 Kelowna AAC, Domenic Rampone

I have been on the AAC for 10 or 12 years. There are 3 main things we struggle with:

- urban-rural conflict - not so much if housing is next to alfalfa but if that farmer changes his use and goes to cherries or grapes and has bird scare devices;
  - e.g., on Benvoulin Rd, pear orchard has been there for years and City approved a housing project with a playground touching the fence; when the farmer sprays

- the trees that are right there, it causes complaints; if it had to been approved, City could have used different design criteria;
- proper buffering also relates to the rural-urban issue; enforcement of buffer installation must be done by City and ALC (may change with new ALC Compliance officers).
- Roads through agricultural land has been a source of heated debates with planners and elected officials. The cheapest way to put the road through may not be the best because it really impacts agricultural land. It affects the uses of the land, increased traffic, moving equipment.
- Official Community Plan review process - City always involves the AAC which is good but some of the little things within the OCP could affect agriculture in future. AAC could advise the City more on those details.

AAC has a very good relationship with the planners. It has been good that even applications outside the ALR have been referred to the AAC and the City has taken its recommendations seriously.

AAC has a good cross-section of people: 3 active farmers, 1 retired farmer, and a couple of people who are not in the industry but have a passion to preserve the agricultural land.

A lot of people come before the AAC saying that I have to sell my land because it is not economically viable. We get into discussions about economics but I am not sure it is our mandate.

Usually once per 12 or 18 months, the AAC meets with City Council for an informal discussion of issues. We do not have an elected official on our AAC, the way the City set it up.

AAC has met with the ALC panel, hosted by the City, and the general discussion of issues has been really good. It sure helps create understanding of procedures.

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### III.2.A.2 Lake Country AAC, Quentin Wyne

Quentin was a founding member of the AAC and discussed its formation. A challenge was the selection of members. To me, being involved in agri-business, it made sense to join the committee to influence policies that protect my investment. It has been very difficult to find people to volunteer for the committee who can attend regularly and have knowledge to contribute. They expanded the terms of reference to include people from different backgrounds not necessarily from agriculture, such as tourism that have the potential to influence, or be influenced by, agriculture.

Thus, our terms of reference is a living document, which includes the kinds of things the AAC considers. Lake Country is a new community and is developing bylaws, principles, and practices about governance. In the area of agriculture, it is a developing process where we are continually interacting with the community and people who are bringing issues to the AAC. We are finding new ways of dealing with things and new things to deal with.

Originally, our initial goal was to develop an agricultural plan for the community. That turned out to be quite a difficult process because we had to develop a steering committee and to hire appropriate people to assist us. With the lack of resources, we had to organise a public outreach process and have community input. Resource people, like Carl Withler (BCMAL) helped us through it. The AAC uses the comprehensive agriculture plan and its (committee) terms of reference to guide it.

One of the other challenges was learning how to interact with municipal staff. The experienced, knowledgeable staff of the City of Kelowna gave a lot of support to Lake Country's small staff who are stretched thin. We can also work together with the Kelowna AAC.

Once the AAC was established, we wished to create awareness in the community that the committee existed and what it was about. We wanted to develop public buy-in and create awareness that people could influence agriculture and derive some community benefit by controlling their own affairs. Even now, people are not aware they can come to talk to us, and through us, gain access to Council on agricultural issues. It is something we are continuing to work on, but it is expensive for advertising and programs to reach out to the community. So, we have to be creative in piggy-backing on other programs or getting things done free.

That is my experience in a relatively small community.

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### III.2.A.3. Regional District of the Central Okanagan AAC, Tony Cetinski

What struck me during the introductions around the room today is the diversity of issues that come before our AAC is as great as the diversity here. So, what keeps me interested in the long term is that you never know what is going to come before you. When the meeting agenda envelopes arrive at my house, I wonder 'what have we got this time'. You see everything, the standard issues - exclusions, home site severances, subdivisions within the ALR, non-farm use which is becoming a big issue in more urban areas, farm worker housing, and secondary dwellings.

For new AACs, be prepared for the diversity that is going to come your way. Try to select people for the committee and the infrastructure support for the committee with as much diversity, experience, and expertise as you can get. Things have changed for our regional district AAC where West Kelowna is no longer under our jurisdiction, and the areas left now are a lot less urban. So, there is less development pressure, but more pressure for change within the designations on the properties. The issues that will come before an AAC will vary depending on the type of area it is.

If you can get public involvement in any way on the issues that come before you, then you will be in a better position to make an informed decision that has benefit not only for the application proponent, but also for the ALR and for the community as a whole. That is what I am interested in - making the best agricultural decisions for the Regional District of Central Okanagan.



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#### III.2.A.4. Lake Country AAC, Al Gatzke

I will comment on what I think builds a strong AAC. There are two roles that consistently come up: advisory and advocacy. To be effective in an advisory role, an AAC must be credible to both Council or Regional Board and the farmers. Some farmer colleagues like to burn waste regardless of where the smoke goes and they need to understand there are other people who live in the community. Often, re. advocacy, some AACs have budgets and can take action.

To build credibility properly, the first step is the diversity on the AAC. The first reaction is to put farmers on the AAC for a complete understanding of the types of local agriculture. But, that is not the only connection. To me, an example of a strong AAC is in Surrey - which has lawyers, a councillor, a core of farmers, but it was more about the people who have the passion and commitment to take ownership of the right direction that community should be heading. The ability to contribute is based on knowledge. Sometimes the agenda material contains planning terminology and documents which require experience or training for AAC members. To be credible, you have to know how the local government systems work.

AAC members need to stay current. One way is the networking exercises, such as today, and every two years. I have advocated that the three central Okanagan AACs get on a bus with the decision-makers, developer, and stakeholders to create better understanding. Then, when we do hit roadblocks and issues, at least there is respect because you have a relationship. “Sub-local” networking opportunities are possible - in south Okanagan, the 3 central Okanagan AACs - because the type of agriculture changes slowly geographically and there commonalities.



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### III.2.B. Dealing with ALR Applications: What is the ALC looking for from AACs? Issues include home site severance, subdivision, exclusion, and non-farm uses Brandy Ridout, Land Use Planner, and Roger Cheetham, Regional Planner

*Brandy Ridout has been a Land Use Planner with the Agricultural Land Commission for four years. She is responsible for processing applications to the ALC from the Okanagan region. Previously, she worked 3 years with the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome, Italy. She has a degree in Environmental Studies.*

*Roger Cheetham has worked as a Regional Planner with the ALC for 17 years. He has been responsible for advising and representing the Commission on land use planning matters - including growth strategies, OCPs, and land use bylaws - for Vancouver Island and other areas of the province. He has also been involved with several AAC processes including those for the Saanich peninsula, North Cowichan, and the Comox Valley. Prior to immigrating to Canada in 1990, he managed a planning office in South Africa. He has also worked in the United Kingdom where he gained his planning qualification.*

The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) controls the ALR boundary, non-farm uses and subdivisions in the ALR. The ALC also works with local governments on land use planning. Local government plans and bylaws for land within the ALR must be consistent with the ALC Act.

The decisions of the ALC are made by one of six regional panels, each with a vice chair, and two Commissioners. Members are appointed from regions. There is a panel that serves the Okanagan region and one that serves the Kootenay region.

The ALC receives approximately 600-700 applications annually across the province.

Roles of various actors in the application process are:

Landowner:

- Determines application type and submits via the local government

Local Government:

- Reviews application and completes local government report
- Refers to AAC and Regional Board or Council
- If authorized, forwards application to ALC for decision

ALC Review:

- Staff do background research and summary report
- ALC panel meets with applicant on site or holds a public meeting
- Commission makes decision and notifies applicant

#### Application types

600 - 700 applications/year (640 in 2008)

	Kootenays	Okanagan
exclusion	13	20
inclusion	2	11
subdivision/ non-farm	74	76
other	7	11
total	96	118

#### How does the ALC make decisions:

The main consideration - is it good or bad for agriculture?

The Property:

- Agriculture capability rating
- Agricultural suitability
- Impact on existing or potential agricultural use

Area Concerns & Other Considerations:

- Regional & community planning objectives
- Local government & AAC recommendations
- Impact on adjacent properties/agricultural use of area
- Alternate locations outside ALR

When making decisions about applications affecting use of agricultural land, the Commission considers many factors with the mandate of protecting agriculture in the long term.



The main consideration when making decisions about land in the ALR is whether it is good or bad for agriculture. Other considerations include the agricultural capability and suitability of the site, and the impact on existing or potential agricultural use. Other considerations include regional planning objectives, the local government and AAC recommendations, impacts on neighbouring properties and area, and alternative locations outside of the ALR for the application.

ALC policies regarding additional dwellings are:

- No limit for additional dwellings if necessary for farm use - Local government (LG) makes the determination
- ALC Regulations permit one secondary suite within footprint of existing dwelling and one manufactured home not more than 9 metres in width for owner's immediate family - LG can prohibit
- Seasonal accommodation - various approaches (e.g. shared kitchen and bathroom facilities with dormitory type bedrooms)

The Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation (Section 2) lists two categories of uses - those which a local government can regulate but not prohibit, and those which a local government may prohibit. The Commission has endeavoured to do what it can to encourage agriculture by permitting uses that it considered to be compatible with agriculture and which provide opportunity for additional sources of income.

**Farm Uses (Section 2 of Regs.)\***

**Local government can regulate but not prohibit**

- Farm retail sales
- Winery & cidery
- Storage, packing & processing of farm products
- Temporary or seasonal agri-tourism **activities**
- Agro-forestry
- Equestrian facilities
- Application of soil amendments & production of compost

\* Uses have specific thresholds/conditions

**Permitted Uses (Section 3 of Regs.)\***

**Local government may prohibit these uses**

- Agri-tourism **accommodation**
- 1 secondary suite & 1 manufactured home
- Home occupation use including B&B
- Temporary sawmill
- Conservation, passive recreation
- Pet kennels and breeding facilities
- Education & research (not schools)

\* Uses have specific thresholds/conditions

The AACs' role is to provide recommendations to their local government on applications within the ALR which are then provided to the ALC (at the discretion of the local government).

AACs contain a wealth of local agricultural knowledge and the information passed on from AACs to the ALC can be very helpful in gaining a full understanding of the application and potential impacts. Information that the ALC finds useful when reviewing applications include:

- assessment of the agricultural potential of the property
- limitations to the proposed agricultural development
- history of agriculture on the property
- potential impacts of the proposal on farm activity on the site and the surrounding farming area
- opinions on whether the application is a benefit to agriculture as a whole
- the reasons why the AAC made such recommendations to the local government

The presenters provided a list of questions that AACs should be asking when reviewing applications based on the type of application.

For Subdivision applications

- Questions to ask when reviewing:
  - Is the property suitable for agriculture?
  - Are there portions of the property less suited to agricultural use?
  - Is there a natural divide to the property (ravine/road)? Does this impact the ability to use the property as a unit?
  - Would reducing the parcel size reduce the types of agriculture that could occur?
  - If approved, would another home site be built on the land? Where?
- Other things to keep in mind:
  - Impact on neighbouring farms and the area
  - Could subdivision be offset by a benefit to agriculture?

For home site severance applications:

- Questions to ask when reviewing:
  - Does the applicant qualify for consideration under the Policy (owned & occupied property since December 21, 1972)?
  - Will the remainder constitute an agricultural parcel?
  - Is there a better location on the property for the home site lot?
- Other things to keep in mind:
  - No one has an automatic right to a home site severance
  - If the applicants do not qualify, the ALC will consider the application as a standard subdivision request

For non-farm use applications:

- Questions to ask when reviewing:
  - Impact on property (i.e. portion of land can't be farmed)?
  - Will the use benefit the local agricultural community?
  - Are there any other places in the community where the use can go (i.e. an industrial zone)?
- Other things to keep in mind:
  - If successful, expansion could be requested
  - Time limits
  - If use is allowed once, it could be requested by other landowners

For ALR exclusion applications:

- Questions to ask when reviewing:
  - Does the property have agricultural capability?
  - History of agriculture on the property?
  - What would be the impact on surrounding farms and the agricultural community in the area?
  - Are the applicants proposing a benefit to agriculture?
- Other things to keep in mind:
  - The Agricultural Plan

For more information about the Agricultural Land Commission and the ALR, visit [www.alc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca).



### III.2.C. Farm Home Plates: Local Government Experience

At the time of the workshop, no local governments in the Okanagan or Kootenay regions had adopted nor begun to plan for a farm home plate bylaw to regulate the size and placement of homes on properties within the ALR. Four local governments in the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver have either adopted a farm home plate bylaw, or are in various stages of development of one.

Staffs from both the City of Abbotsford and the Corporation of Delta were invited to give presentations to the Okanagan/Kootenays workshop about their experiences developing a farm home plate bylaw. Both presenters had given similar presentations to the Lower Mainland/Central Coast workshop earlier in February. Their presentations are copied from that section of the proceedings.

#### III.2.C.1. City of Abbotsford Home Plate Policy Proposal

Grant Acheson, City of Abbotsford

*Grant Acheson is the Director of Development Services for the City of Abbotsford, and has held this position since 2001. He is a civil engineer and prior to Abbotsford held positions in the City of White Rock as the City Engineer, and at the former Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack as the Engineering Officer. He graduated from the Royal Military College and served five years with the Canadian Armed Forces following graduation. He continues to serve as a reserve force army officer with 39 Combat Engineer Regiment. When not occupied by these, he enjoys running and snowboarding.*

Grant Acheson explained that there is a need for a home plate policy in the City of Abbotsford due to a greater use of ALR lots for residential-only purposes. House sizes are limited in the urban area in Abbotsford, thus the ALR has become the default zone for large estate homes. Furthermore, the siting of residential buildings in the ALR can have a negative impact on the agriculture potential of the lot and neighbouring farm land.

The City of Abbotsford has proposed a home plate policy which is currently being discussed. Consultation has occurred with the AAC, Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Committee, and the Bradner community.

The proposed policy defines a home plate as: that portion of a lot that includes a principal dwelling, any additional dwelling, and/or any accessory farm residential facilities. It includes residential parking areas, accessory buildings, tennis courts, swimming pools, etc., but it excludes the driveway and septic field.

The graphic is titled "Abbotsford Homeplate Proposal" in white text on a dark blue background. Below the title, it lists three main bullet points: "Maximum Homeplate Area", "Setback", and "Maximum Total Floor Area". Each bullet point has sub-points detailing specific requirements in square meters and setbacks. At the bottom left is the Abbotsford logo, and at the bottom right is the slogan "city in the country" in a script font.

- **Maximum Homeplate Area**
  - for primary residence 1600 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 650 m<sup>2</sup>
  - Maximum homeplate of 2,250 contiguous m<sup>2</sup>
- **Setback**
  - Homeplate setback no more than 60 m from the front or side road
  - Co-locate replacement and second dwellings with existing
- **Maximum Total Floor Area**
  - For primary residence 800 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 325 m<sup>2</sup>

ABBOTSFORD city in the country

### Abbotsford Home Plate Proposal

- Maximum Home Plate Area
  - for primary residence 1,600 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 650 m<sup>2</sup>
  - Maximum home plate of 2,250 contiguous m<sup>2</sup>
- Setback
  - Home plate setback no more than 60 m from the front or side road
  - Co-locate replacement and second dwellings with existing
- Maximum Total Floor Area
  - For primary residence 800 m<sup>2</sup>
  - For secondary residence 325 m<sup>2</sup>
- New dwelling to be located within 15m of existing house
  - Share driveway, septic field, etc
- Variance process provides ability to relax set back rules if preferred site does not impact the future agriculture potential of the lot or neighbouring farmland

In a study that looked at 139 residential building applications in the ALR between 2005 - 2008:

- 96% of primary dwellings met the proposed bylaw for total floor area
- 83% of primary dwellings met the proposed bylaw for home plate area
- 53% of primary dwellings met the proposed bylaw for setbacks (80% within 100 m of the road)
- The majority of secondary dwellings did not meet the proposed home plate area (80%) or setback standards (63%). It is important that the second dwelling comply because it often becomes the principal dwelling.

The proposed home plate policy has been met with mixed reviews from Council and the AAC. Council has asked for more consultation with farmers before going forward.

### Examples

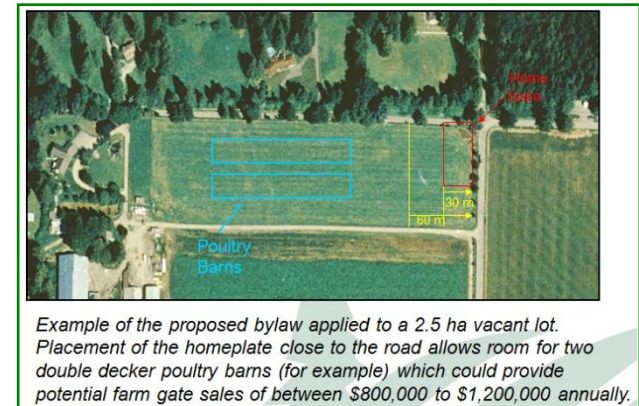
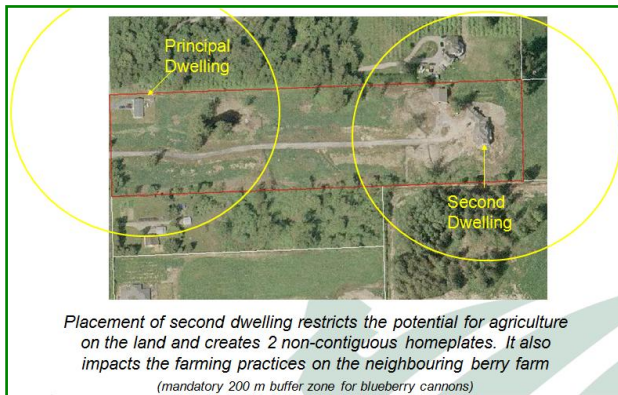
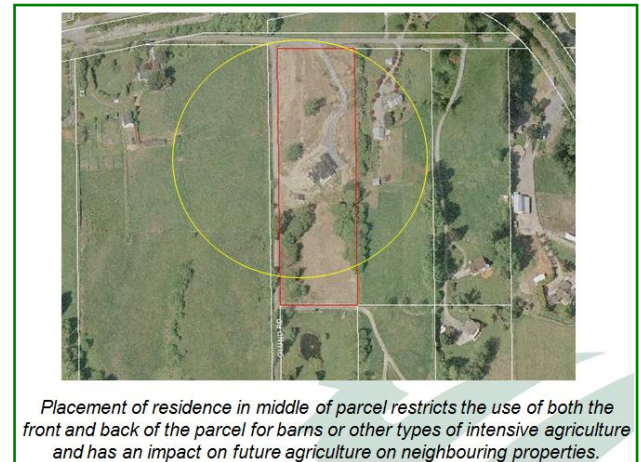
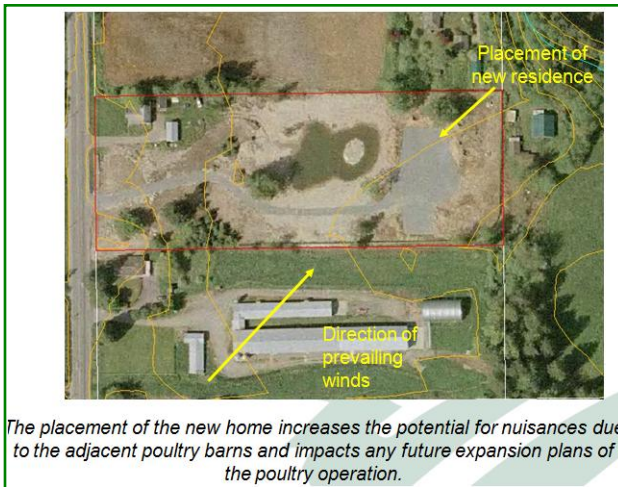


*Large homeplate covering a good portion of 4.2 ha A1 zoned parcel*



*city in the country*





### Lessons Learned

- Be clear and concise on purpose.
- Ensure you have in-house support before rolling out.
- Create effective messaging.
- Distinguish between preservation land for soil-based farming, and farming.
- Provide method to deal with special cases.



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### III.2.C.2. Farm Home Plate Regulations: The Corporation of Delta

Susan Elbe, The Corporation of Delta

*Susan Elbe has been a planner with the Corporation of Delta for 9 years. Her most recent work in developing agricultural policy was to create a bylaw to allow housing for migrant farm workers on farms. She also does work on issues related to waterfront planning and development, development on steep slopes, industrial redevelopment on brownfield sites, and various other development projects.*

The Farm Home Plate regulations have been in place in The Corporation of Delta since May 31, 2006 and were implemented to address a Council concern over construction of large estate homes in the ALR and associated lost productivity on agricultural lands.

The policy specifications are:

Maximum Farm Home Plate Area	Dwelling Type
3,600 m <sup>2</sup>	1 Farm House
5,000 m <sup>2</sup>	1 Farm House & 1 Additional Farm House (must be on same FHP)
1,400 m <sup>2</sup>	Migrant Farm Worker Housing (can be on same or separate FHP)

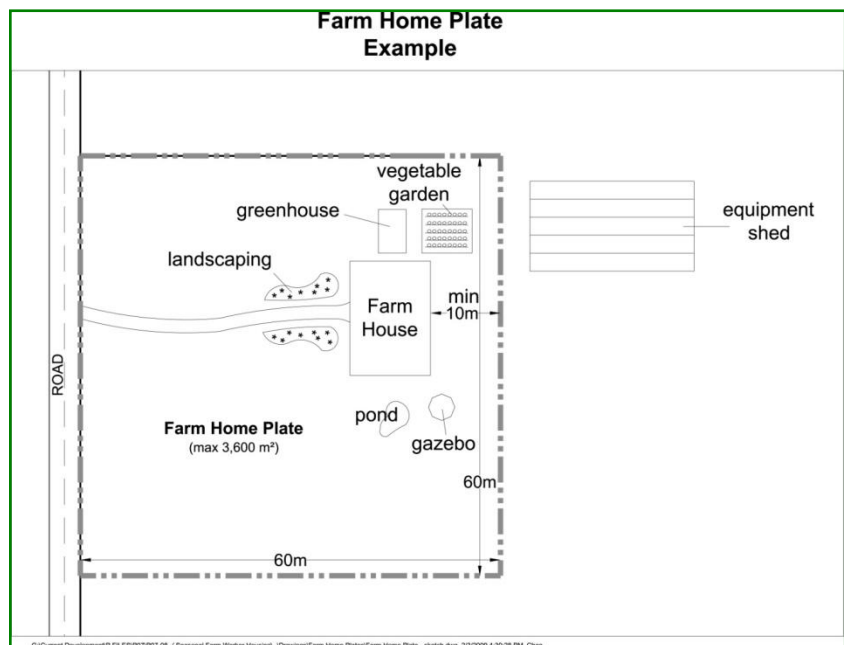
#### Maximum Farm Home Plate Depth

60 m from a dedicated OR constructed road; and

100 m where the Farm Home Plate and Migrant Farm Worker Farm Home Plate are adjoining and on the same lot.

An owner can apply for a variance permit for any of the regulations.

The agencies involved in the development of the FHP regulations were: Delta Farmer's Institute, Ministry of Agriculture & Lands, the Corporation of Delta, Agricultural Zoning Task Force, Delta Agricultural Advisory Committee, Delta's Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Development & Environment Advisory Committee. As well, many stakeholders were involved in consultation



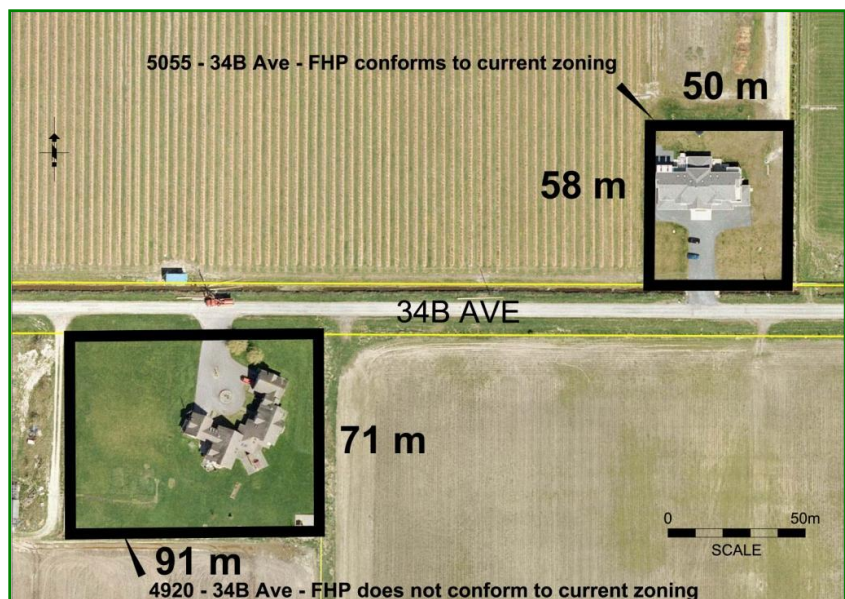
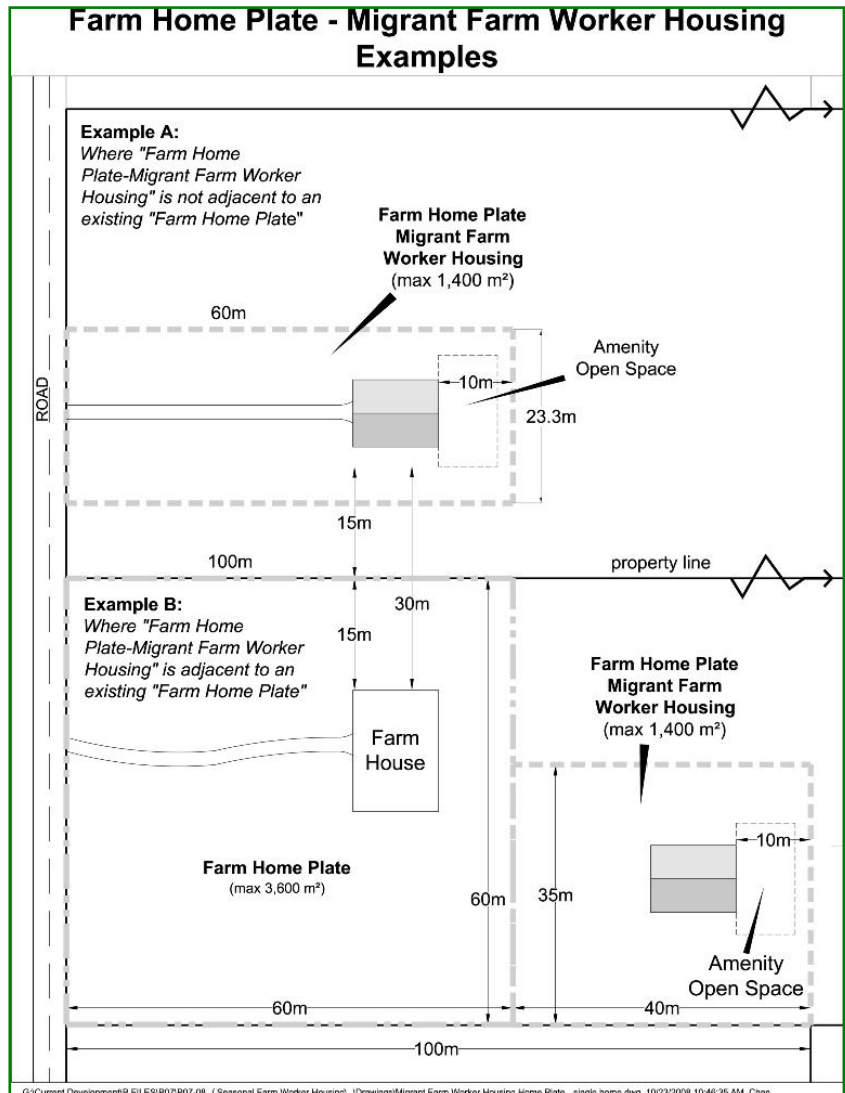
including conservation agencies, agricultural industry associations and local designers and architects.

The successes thus far include the end of large land areas being taken out of production for residential use. There is also a high level of awareness about the new regulations. The average number of houses built on farm land has decreased slightly, but has not stopped. The development variance permit process has worked where effects on farming would be less, or the lot shape was awkward.

However, the development of a FHP regulation had its challenges. The controversy experienced during the development of the bylaws has created some distrust between the farming community and municipal government. There have been some limitations experienced with the maximum FHP of 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> when combined with the 60 m maximum FHP depth on narrow parcels. There have been misunderstandings about the amount of fill permitted - is not for entire FHP but only the house area and tapered down to ground level.

For municipalities considering developing a FHP bylaw, The Corporation of Delta recommends:

- Consider preparing a FHP policy as part of a larger policy on housing in the ALR to





further discourage use of farm land for “estate” housing.

- Review lot sizes in the municipality to assess how many might not be able to conform to proposed FHP regulations. If the number is high, a two-tiered FHP system which allows different FHP dimensions for smaller or narrower lots could be considered.
- Try to create as few non-conformities as possible while still achieving the goal of preserving farm land.
- Remember that board of variance and development variance permit processes can be used where special circumstances might make it difficult to conform to the FHP.



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### III.2.D. Housing for Temporary Farm Workers: Bylaw Guidelines Developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Bert van Dalftsen, Manager, Strengthening Farming Program, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

*Bert van Dalftsen has many years of experience as an engineer with BCMAL, dealing with several regions of B.C. He grew up on the dairy farm that his family still owns and operates in the north Okanagan. He has been Manager of the Strengthening Farming Program since 2004.*

#### Temporary Farm Worker Housing

In response to a shortage of local agricultural labour, in the last several years, federal programs such as the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and the Low Skill Pilot Program have become available to B.C. farmers. These programs bring migrant labour to B.C. farms which has resulted in a temporary influx of workers being housed on farms, and some new challenges for local governments. Housing the migrant workers has become a new issue and housing domestic workers is also a concern particularly Quebec workers in the Okanagan fruit industry.

In 2008, the BCMAL developed a ministry bylaw standard for regulating temporary farm worker housing in the ALR. With the guidelines, the ministry also released a draft discussion paper, both of which were reviewed by 11 local governments as well as some industry associations.

The discussion paper and guidelines only addressed migrant farm worker housing for workers who are enrolled a federal program, with the intention of drafting domestic farm worker guidelines in the near future. These standards may also be applied to domestic farm workers; however, local governments may require more criteria to prevent the misuse of housing for non-farm purposes.

#### Discussion Paper

##### Goals:

- Meet agriculture industry needs
- Minimize residential impact in ag area
- Minimize loss or fragmentation of ag land
- Minimize risk of TFWH used for non-farm purposes

The criteria that BCMAL developed reflect the most restrictive elements of a local bylaw to regulate temporary farm worker housing. Local governments may choose to be less restrictive especially if concerns over misuse are minimal.



**Temporary Farm Worker Housing Criteria:**

- *Farm class*
- *Minimum farm unit – 4 ha.*
- *Maximum Usable Floor Area – 10 m<sup>2</sup> per worker*
- *Time and User Restrictions*
  - *Statutory declaration – time period*
  - *Restrictive covenant – remove and restore – 2 yr*
  - *Employee transfer permitted (SAWP only)*

**Other Criteria:**

- *Workers registered in federal programs*
- *TFWH meets other standards*
- *TFWH only on parcel owned by applicant*
- *Amenity space requirements are optional*

**Temporary Farm Worker Housing Maximum Number of Workers Criteria**

- *Greenhouse operations, mushroom operations and berry/vegetable operations with on-farm processing or product preparation:*
  - *1 worker per 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of principal farm building floor area, to a minimum ceiling of 130 workers per farm*
- *All other commodities:*
  - *a minimum ceiling of 40 workers per farm*

The number of workers housed on farm is a controversial issue. Local governments indicated that they may see large increases in the number of rural residents, putting a strain on current infrastructure; whereas, farmers are concerned about their ability to fulfill labour requirements.

Another controversial topic was the type of housing criteria. BCMAL criteria favoured using either an existing building or a manufactured home. Non-manufactured housing could be used in circumstances for which additional criteria may be imposed by local governments.

BCMAL guidelines address home plate and setback criteria for temporary farm worker housing (TFWH) such that housing must be located near existing principal residences if present on the lot.

- Home plate applies
- Or TFWH maximum setback of 15 m to the - primary residence & maximum 60 m from road.
- Vacant lot - must be temporary manufactured housing
- Home plate or setbacks may be varied .

The proposed standard requires a financial guarantee to the local government for building removal or decommissioning if not being used for temporary farm worker housing.

At the time of the presentation, the next step is to adopt the standards. *[Ed. Note: - The standards were adopted and circulated in April 2009.]*



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### III.2.E. Agricultural Area Planning

Keith Duhaime, Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission

*Keith Duhaime is the Agricultural Support Officer for the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission. A major focus of his work is the implementation of the agricultural area plan of the Regional District of Central Okanagan. He was also part of the team that prepared the Summerland agricultural plan. He is a Professional Agrologist.*

Keith Duhaime spoke about agricultural area planning from the local government viewpoint.

#### Where?

- Local Government
  - Integral component of an OCP.
    - The voice of agriculture in local planning.
    - Consistent with other local government policies on zoning, water, transportation, sanitation.
  - Consistent with provincial policies and interests (eg. ALC, Right to Farm).
  - Reflective of Federal policy (eg. APF 2 and EFPs). (\*Making it real!)

#### Why?

- Improve the competitiveness of local agriculture
  - Sustainable profitability
  - Competition for land, water, labour, other resources
  - Enhanced opportunities.
- Improve consistency in local planning
- Improve community cohesion.

#### What?

- Provide a voice for agriculture in the OCP.
- Address issues and challenges to agriculture within the municipality.
- Improve the competitiveness of local agriculture.
- Ensure good neighbours.
- Both a Product and a Process
- Product: The Agricultural Area Plan
  - Background Report
    - Resources (Soils, climate), Economics (Sectors, \$), and Policies
  - Issues and Opportunities
    - Conflicts, opportunities, stakeholders, win/win?
  - The Plan
    - Issues and Stakeholders
    - Objectives and Policies
    - Metrics (Are we successful?)
    - Recourse (What do we do when not successful?)
- Process: Agricultural Planning.
  - Agriculture in the community (context)
  - Globally - Nationally - Provincially - Locally
  - Background report
  - Stakeholder meetings
  - Issues and Opportunities
  - Drafting and Public review and process
  - The Plan

**When?**

- In advance of an OCP review
- When farmers are available!!!
  - October / November start?
  - March / April finish?
  - NOT WHEN FARMERS ARE FARMING!

**Who?**

- Agricultural Advisory Committee
  - Steering Committee:
    - AAC reps.
    - Council liaison
    - Industry (non-AAC)
    - Staff (eg. Planning)
    - B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands representation
    - Agricultural Support Officer (Central Okanagan)
- Project Team:
  - Agrologist
  - Planner
  - Facilitator
  - Engineer
- Resource Partners:
  - Investment Agriculture Foundation (funds)
  - B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (data)

Keith then talked about three key issues in which he is involved as the Agricultural Support Officer:

**1. Farm Labour**

- BCFGA (BC Fruit Growers Assoc.) Labour Committee
  - Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
  - Quebecois youth
- Housing
  - SAWP (Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program) Guidelines
  - Home plate?
- Transportation
  - Valley-wide Shuttles
  - Local transit, bicycle share programs, other? (GIS???)
- Other issues:
  - Professional, Managerial, and General labour

**2. Local livestock processing**

- Meat Inspection Regulation
  - September, 2007
  - Abattoir Succession
  - B.C. Assessment: Farm status review (In progress).
- Challenges:
  - Water (IHA)
  - Waste disposal (BC MOE, Local govt.)
  - Docking stations (BC CDC, CFIA)

- Biosecurity (BC MAL, CFIA, BC CDC)
- Successes: Poultry mobile unit, Red meat?

### 3. Succession and renewal

- Challenge: Demographics
  - 1,100 farms, average age is 57 (2006 Census)
  - BCFGA: 2/3 of farmers to retire in < 5 years
  - Veterans Land Act legacy
- Opportunity: Renewal
  - Foreign Direct Investment Program
  - Diversified skills → Diversified agriculture
  - Improved competitiveness in agri-tourism, culinary tourism
  - Partners???
  - The Royal Show (Warwickshire, July)



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### III.3. Small Group Discussions

#### **Purpose:**

The intent of the small group discussion sessions was for AAC members to exchange ideas and information they have gained from past experiences. The topics chosen were suggested by various AACs, as matters they have been addressing, or that they foresee as being important.

This information exchange should assist AACs in their future deliberations and enhance the effectiveness of their advisory role to their council or board.

#### III.3.A. Results of Discussion Groups

##### III.3.A.1. Topic 1: Agricultural issues faced by local government politicians

**Senior government policy framework is needed:-** Participants had a general opinion that the federal and provincial governments lack a comprehensive agricultural policy. In the absence of a policy framework, local governments find it difficult to develop regional policies such as for growth management. There is also an opinion that the Province is downloading its responsibilities to local governments without adequate consultation. The Province wants “one size fits all” for regulation of agriculture, instead of each community creating its own rules. During slow economic times, government incentive fund could have gone to create farm-related direct and indirect jobs, instead of to big auto manufacturers.

**Local government understanding of agriculture planning is expanding:-** Although often starting from scratch to plan for agriculture, local governments see it as both an opportunity and a challenge. Budgeting and seeking external funding is a part of the challenge. Also, they find there is no one, easy-to-find information source. For new agriculture-oriented bylaws, they often take bylaws from other jurisdictions and convert them to local characteristics. Some communities want a definition of agriculture. Others may not realize the size of local agriculture and often ignore it as an industry. As an economic driver, farming usually goes beyond wineries and scenery. Once a local government gives priority to agriculture, it must build a relationship with the ALC. Then, it can add policy direction to its OCP that communicates local values and issues identified by multiple stakeholders.

**Be aware of industry trends and options:-** Discussion occurred about the increasing concentration of the agriculture industry. It was suggested there be a program for consolidation of smaller, less-viable farms so that the remaining farmers can make a better living. Participants thought some wine operations are closing. Another suggested response to monopolistic marketplace is for farmers to form a co-op and market themselves together, each growing something different. There could also be a local marketing program.

**Teach newcomers and urbanites about farming methods:-** At the same time, there are challenges making farming affordable for newcomers and to train them - perhaps via new university programs. Urban dwellers are learning about farming through community gardens, farmers markets, and agri-tourism. Consumers (voters) are searching for more local foods and for food security with a more diverse, sophisticated diet.

**Water is a key focus for agriculture:-** Water issues include: governance, sharing with urban and ecosystem users, cost, stewardship, volumes, and quality. Agricultural waste must also get local government attention. Infrastructure planning for farming must be part of land use



decision-making and agricultural applications should be reviewed for their engineering or utility implications.

***Local action is needed for weed and pest control:-*** Local government co-operation is required for action under the *Noxious Weed Act* and for starling control on a regional basis, e.g., across the Okanagan to protect berry and grape crops.

***Okanagan - Kootenay local governments face several housing issues:*** houses and subdivisions inside the ALR, additional houses on the same lot, temporary farm worker housing and transient workers without accommodation who set up tents and use public facilities.

***Rural-urban interface is a challenge:-*** A large present, and future, challenge for local governments is the rural-urban interface where new residents lacking tolerance for farm practices that cause noise, dust, odour - e.g., bird-scare devices, machinery.

***ALR is not a development land bank:-*** Some Boards or Councils still see the ALR as a residential land bank, or available for public facilities like health care centres, instead of directing growth or significant projects to town centres and areas outside of the ALR. Within the ALR, agri-tourism uses need more clarity and abuse of agri-tourism accommodation regulations needs enforcement. Lakefront ALR lots perhaps should be allowed to subdivide for non-farm uses, or be excluded because many sites are too steep to farm.

***Riparian areas are sensitive:-*** The Riparian Area Regulation excludes agricultural operations and the inter-relationship of farming and environment is a local issue in many communities. *[Ed. Note: riparian setbacks for farm buildings are nearing completion by the Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment.]*

***Other local issues are:*** domestic animals in drinking-water basins and enforcement of the *Range Act*.



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### III.3.A.2. Topic 2: Public education and agricultural awareness

***AACs build awareness and debate advocacy:-*** As an example of a role of an AAC in creating agriculture awareness, the AACs of Kelowna and Regional District of Central Okanagan have held tours of good and bad examples of issues facing farmers. AACs struggle with how far to take the role of advocacy for farming, with at least one AAC being told not to do so.

***Agriculture needs a local champion:-*** There was discussion of the advantage of having a local leader would be a champion for agriculture. It also is nice to have the involvement of the Chamber of Commerce or the economic development office in support of the industry.

***Improved connection of urbanites and farmers is needed,*** along with heightened awareness and education of the local Council or Board. Third-party groups could do such education, and the local government does not always need a salaried position to do so.

***Decisions on water are becoming disconnected from farmers:-*** One sign of the disconnect is the shift in decision-making regarding water use. The irrigation districts in the Okanagan were created primarily by farmers and their boards of directors were largely farmers. As urban development occurred within the boundaries of the water purveyors, the urban residents became a larger proportion of the water users. More urbanites have become irrigation district directors, or local governments have taken over the water purveyor function. Both trends have resulted in farmers being removed from decision-making about water.

***Tell farmers' stories:-*** To help close the disconnect, public communicators could tell farmers' stories, to bring some "culture" back into agriculture.

***Increase farm awareness at the rural-urban edge:-*** Awareness of farming and farm practices is important at the rural-urban interface. Real estate agents should inform potential owners in the edge areas about nearby farming activities. Local governments could formalize this notification by having covenants placed on properties within 100 metres of farm practices. [Ed. Note: BCMAL's "Guide to Edge Planning" recommends such disclosure statements be registered on land titles of developments within 300 metres of the farm land boundary.]

***Make time to learn about agriculture:-*** Local governments should set aside time for awareness building (of politicians, planning and parks staff, and AAC members) about agricultural issues - perhaps based on 1 or 2 issues at a time - e.g., edge planning. The Council or Board could take advantage of agenda times for public delegations to receive farming information.

***Other local education activities could include:***

- Website(s) with agriculture information, including a link to the ALC website
- Existing mail outs (e.g., utility bills) to promote the website(s)
- Signs informing the public about farm operations - e.g., red-yellow-green lights for spraying
- Signs re. where to buy local products
- "Food daze" featuring chefs or restaurants that use local foods and wines from local wineries
- Farm tours particularly for decision-makers and business community:
  - E.g., circle farm tours, The Packinghouse, Sun Rype
  - Good timing may be between the municipal budget approval (May) and summer.

**Support agriculture education in schools:-** Educating kids about agriculture in the Kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum is occurring through Agriculture in the Classroom. These efforts are helping teach kids where food comes from. High school career fairs should feature farming.

**Promote some post-secondary agricultural training by:**

- fostering apprenticeship programs
- encouraging Planning students to discuss ‘real’ farming issues, and by
- re-locating the UBC agriculture faculty (Land and Food Systems) from the Point Grey campus in Vancouver to UBC Okanagan in Kelowna.

**Consider “local food” myth and problems:-** In “food security” discussions, there is a misconception that all commercial agriculture is ‘bad’, but it is not so. Participants noted there can be problems finding local food - insufficient supply for farmers markets and un-signed products in supermarkets.



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#### III.4. Closing Remarks

Wray McDonnell, Assistant Director, Sustainable Agriculture Management Branch, B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (BCMAL) closed the session by thanking the panellists and other speakers. They have contributed valuable information which the local governments can use in their communities.

Wray thanked Stan Combs, BCMAL Land Use Agrologist, for coordinating the organisation of the workshop and for facilitating the day’s activities. He thanked Jim LeMaistre, BCMAL Land Use Planner, for his coordinating role, and Carl Withler, BCMAL Resource Stewardship Agrologist, for assisting with registration and other details.

He thanked the participants and reminded them that if they require assistance on agricultural issues in the future, they can contact the BCMAL-ALC agri-teams as listed on the Strengthening Farming website at: [www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/) .



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### III.5. Attendees - 2009 AAC Workshop III - Okanagan & Kootenays Regions

13 AAC members shown in this colour of text

40 Local government representatives shown in this colour of text

9 Provincial government representatives shown in this colour of text

4 Consultants & others shown in this colour of text

66

	First	Surname	Position	Organization
1	Kevin	Murphy	Resource Stewardship Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
2	Ron	Fralick	Planner	Central Okanagan, Regional District of
3	Janelle	Taylor	Planner	Central Okanagan, Regional District of
4	Craig	Broderick	Director of Development Services	Coldstream
5	Doug	Stevenson	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Coldstream
6	Debbie	Bobocel	Development Services Assistant	Columbia Shuswap Regional District
7	Jennifer	Sham	Development Services Assistant	Columbia Shuswap Regional District
8	Dave	Whiting	Coldstream Agriculture Plan Consultant	Dave Whiting Consulting
9	Gino	Nasato	Case Manager	Farm Industry Review Board
10	Arne	Raven		Kamloops Stock Association
11	Andrew	Browne	Land Use Planner	Kelowna
12	Damien	Burggraefe	Subdivision Planner	Kelowna
13	Pierre	Calissi	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Kelowna
14	Birte	Decloux	Land Use Planner	Kelowna
15	Shelley	Gambacort	Director, Land Use Management	Kelowna
16	Leo	Gebert	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Kelowna
17	Brian	Heichart	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Kelowna
18	Ed	Henkel	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Kelowna
19	Graham	James	Councillor	Kelowna
20	Danielle	Noble	Manager, Urban Land Use	Kelowna
21	Jim	Paterson	General Manager, Community Sustainability	Kelowna
22	Greg	Sauer	Planner	Kelowna
23	Luke	Turri	Land Use Planner	Kelowna
24	Joni	Heinrich	Chief Administrative Officer	Keremeos
25	Gary	Thielmann	Councillor	Keremeos
26	Wendy	McCulloch	General Manager of Community Futures	Kootenay Boundary
27	Donna	Dean	Planner	Kootenay Boundary Regional District
28	Jennifer	deGroot	Planning Assistant	North Okanagan, Regional District of
29	Eugene	Foisy	Electoral Area Director	North Okanagan, Regional District of

### Workshop III: Okanagan & Kootenay Regions

	<b>First</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>
30	Steve	Noakes	Planner	North Okanagan, Regional District of
31	Julie	Pilon	Electoral Area Director	North Okanagan, Regional District of
32	Brian	Mennell	Advisory Planning Commission	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of
33	Evelyn	Riechert	Planner	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of
34	Jillian	Tamblyn	Environmental Coordinator	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of
35	Mark	Pendergraft	Director	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of, EA "A"
36	Sara	Bunge	Ag Advisory Comm. Member	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of, EA "C"
37	Harold	King	Chair, Advisory Planning Commission	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of, EA "C"
38	Natalie	Minunzie	Advisory Planning Commission	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of, EA "F"
39	Stewart	Patterson	Advisory Planning Commission	Okanagan-Similkameen, Regional District of, EA "F"
40	Dave	Smith	Director, Planning & Development Services	Peachland
41	Kevin	Pearson	Planning and Development Officer	Salmon Arm
42	Heidi	deWit	Councillor	Sicamous
43	Dave	Brew	Councillor	Spallumcheen
44	Jules	Doré	Advisory Planning Commission	Summerland
45	Ken	Haddrell	Advisory Planning Commission	Summerland
46	Barrie	Karner	Advisory Planning Commission	Summerland
47	Ian	McIntosh	Assistant Planner	Summerland
48	Arnie	Raven	Advisory Planning Commission	Thompson Nicola Regional District
49	Jane	Mastin	Coldstream Agriculture Plan Consultant	TRUE Consulting Ltd.
50	Brooke	Marshall	Environmental Planner	Vernon
51	Shannon	Tartaglia	Planning Tech, Development Services	West Kelowna
52	Bryden	Winsby	Councillor	West Kelowna

#### Workshop Resource People

53	Grant	Acheson	SPEAKER - Director of Planning	Abbotsford
54	Roger	Cheetham	SPEAKER - Regional Planner	Agricultural Land Commission
55	Brandy	Ridout	SPEAKER - Land Use Planner	Agricultural Land Commission
56	Stan	Combs	FACILITATOR & Organiser - Land Use Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

	First	Surname	Position	Organization
57	Jim	LeMaistre	Organiser - Land Use Planner	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
58	Wray	McDonnell	SPEAKER - Acting Assistant Director, Sustainable Agriculture Management Branch	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
59	Bert	van Dalfsen	SPEAKER - Manager, Strengthening Farming Program	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
60	Carl	Withler	Resource Stewardship Agrologist	B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
61	Tony	Cetinski	SPEAKER - Chair, Agricultural Advisory Committee	Central Okanagan, Regional District of
62	Keith	Duhaime	SPEAKER - Agricultural Support Officer	Central Okanagan, Regional District of
63	Susan	Elbe	SPEAKER - Planner	Delta
64	Domenic	Rampone	SPEAKER - Agricultural Advisory Committee	Kelowna
65	Al	Gatzke	SPEAKER - Agricultural Advisory Committee	Lake Country
66	Quentin	Wyne	SPEAKER - Agricultural Advisory Committee	Lake Country



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