

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Strengthening Farming Program

2015

Provincial Agriculture Advisory Committee Workshop Summary of Proceedings



Seventh bi-annual AAC Workshop
February 18, 2015
Newlands Golf Course and Country Club
Langley, BC

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The seventh biennial Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture's [Strengthening Farming Program](#) and held on February 18th, 2015 in Langley, British Columbia. It brought AAC members, local government planners, academics, consultants and elected officials together from across B.C. to meet each other and discuss topics around strengthening farming in their communities. Opening remarks for this event were given by the Minister of Agriculture, Norm Letnick.

2.0 2015 AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP AGENDA

Participant Agenda

9:00am	Registration and morning refreshments
9:30am	Welcome and Opening Remarks - Minister of Agriculture Norm Letnick
9:40am	Topic 1: How your AAC can Strengthen Farming in your community Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI) Staff Presentation on Strengthening Farming 101 AAC roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction
10:00am	Topic 2: Sustainable Local Food Systems Real Estate Foundation 2015 Research Findings – David Hendrickson
10:30am	Nutrition Break
10:45am	Topic 3: Primer on ALR changes and Medical Marihuana AGRI Staff Presentation and Q + A session
11:30am	Discussion Session I A facilitated discussion where participants will be divided by topic areas to explore and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Challenges to successful agriculture in your region○ Mechanisms to make the AAC more effective to local government○ Barriers for farmers/communities to access resources and funding○ Economic development strategies for agriculture○ Issues related to water management
12:30pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Panel Session 1: The 'Everything You Wanted to Know' AGRI Panel Panel representation of a local government politician, planner, agrologist and farmer/grower Facilitated Q+A
2:15 pm	Discussion Session II - Stories of Success! A facilitated discussion where participants will be divided by topic areas to explore and discuss examples from across BC of successful Ag Area Plan implementation and strengthening farming initiatives.
3:15pm	Nutrition break
3:30pm	Topic 4: Top Priorities for the Ministry's Strengthening Farming Program in the new term 2014- 2018 AGRI Staff presentation and facilitated Q + A
4:15pm	Wrap-Up and Closing Remarks - Richard Bullock, Agricultural Land Commission Chair
4:30 pm	ADJOURN

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Topic 1: How your AAC can strengthen farming in your community

Presenters: [Alison Fox](#) (Land Use Agrologist - Ministry of Agriculture); [Chris Zabek](#) (Regional Agrologist - Ministry of Agriculture)

In this presentation, staff provided a thorough overview of the Strengthening Farming Program as well as AAC roles, responsibilities and jurisdiction. The impacts of urbanization on farm populations in BC were discussed and the threats to agricultural land were explored. The importance of an effective AAC was highlighted as well as strategies for an AAC to assist local governments in strengthening farming in their communities.

3.2 Topic 2: Sustainable Farm Systems

Presenter [David Hendrickson](#), Grants Manager (Real Estate Foundation)

The presenter detailed how the Real Estate Foundation uses funds for research and initiatives in BC related to local food, safe water and community development. Recently a research project on sustainable local food systems was undertaken in six pilot communities. Although findings were anticipated to be prepared in time for presenting at the AAC workshop, a final report will be publicly available next month.

3.3 Topic 3: Primer on ALR changes and medical marihuana

Presenters [Tim Prisiak](#) (Senior Policy Analyst - Ministry of Agriculture) and [Gregory Bartle](#) (Land Use Planner - Ministry of Agriculture)

Staff outlined the consultation questions, process and summary report for changes to the ALR. Differences in zones 1 and 2 were clarified, as well as responses from local governments to the consultation process. Participants were encouraged to access the summary report [available online](#).

An overview of medical marihuana production facilities in the ALR was given by staff. The federal and provincial context was clarified, as well as the provincial consultation process which began in July 2014. The key message for participants was to ensure their local government regulations were consistent with the [Minister's Bylaws Standards](#) and pending updates in 2015.

3.4 Topic 4: Top Priorities for the Strengthening Farming Program 2014-2018

Presenters: [Alison Fox](#) (Land Use Agrologist - Ministry of Agriculture); [Jill Hatfield](#) (Regional Agrologist - Ministry of Agriculture)

In this interactive session participants were asked to contribute 'wish list' strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the Strengthening Farming Program. Suggestions included:

- ☐ Having a Ministry of Agriculture delegation to local government councils on what makes an AAC function well;
- ☐ Measuring success with a Strengthening Farming Annual report to detail how goals and priorities are being met;
- ☐ Defining a 50 year provincial strategy for agriculture;
- ☐ Having Regional Agrologists attend AAC meetings on a regular basis; and
- ☐ Preparing a template checklist for AAC's to use in evaluating applications.

4.0 DISCUSSION TOPICS

4.1 Discussion Session 1 – Exploring five topics:

In this session, participants were grouped in small table discussion groups facilitated by one regional agrologist or planner to explore and record discussion points related to five topic areas. Participants were asked to vote using dot stickers, on the priority discussion points for each topic.

Challenges to successful agriculture in your region

- Need to set aside more land for processing
- Environmental changes
- Lack of labour
- Urban development pressures
- New meat inspection regulations and loss of on-farm slaughter and sales
- Farm succession
- Competition for land with non-farmers
- Cost of land and competition with cheap produce overseas

Mechanisms to make the AAC more effective to local government

- Budget for education, awareness and professional assistance
- Land use planning training for AAC members
- Require referrals to AAC's
- Regional forum for communicating regional issues
- Better cross section of membership reflecting agricultural community

Barriers to farmers/communities to access resources and funding

- Cost of land
- Lack of information or extension services
- Lack of political support
- Lack of government staff resources in the community

Economic development strategies to support agriculture

- Buy local and shaming non local
- Remove 'silos' and facilitate collaboration and unity with associations and universities
- Have a strong local agricultural area plan to support initiatives

Issues related to water management

- Aquifer pollution and contamination from large industrial farms
- 'Commodifying' water may reduce water for agriculture
- In the Peace region, the oil and gas commission issues water licenses (is this the fox patrolling the henhouse?)
- Enhanced flood protection due to sea level rise; salt water intrusion
- People really don't know how much water is being used
- Water diversions that are unpermitted
- Climate change
- Ground water protection and aquifer vulnerability
- Cost of treatment of safe water

4.2 Discussion Session 2 – Stories of Success:

Participants were organized in small discussion groups facilitated by a regional agrologist or planner to discuss local success stories related to farmland protection; bylaw development or innovation in local government land use planning. The following are several examples from this session:

- ☐ Edge Planning in Surrey – requiring a restrictive covenant for new urban development within 200 metres of the ALR boundary.
- ☐ Farm Home Plate in District of Kent – optimize land available to farming and limit footprint of residential and non farm buildings.
- ☐ Farm Loop Map in West Kelowna – marketing tool for wineries and local agri food and farms on website and print copies
- ☐ Initiating first AAC and Ag area plan in Fraser Fort George – successful start up and commitment for AAC and AG area plan.
- ☐ Living Next to a Farm Brochure from West Kelowna – 2 page document summarizes information in a positive message tone and useful for bylaw complaints.
- ☐ Agricultural Show on Vancouver Island – 2 day event for farmers held every year as a non-profit organization; initiated by regional district.
- ☐ Lecture series in Maple Ridge – series of speakers on various agricultural topics open to the public.
- ☐ Crop identification program in Delta – signs and advertising paid for by the City and available online.
- ☐ Tsawwassen First Nation Farm School – 20 acre farm school set aside for First Nation students to grow agricultural products
- ☐ Zoning regulations for temporary farmworker housing in Delta – became provincial standard

- ❑ Economic impact of agriculture in Abbotsford – Chamber of Commerce did a study to show the direct economic impact of agricultural activities and products.
- ❑ Agricultural Plan Support Officer in District of West Kelowna – 1 FTE dedicated to implementing the agricultural plan who makes recommendations to council and updates goals and policies annually.

5.0 PANEL DISCUSSION

Panelists for this discussion were:

- *Chris Zabek, Regional Agrologist – Ministry of Agriculture*
- *Martin Collins, Regional Planner – Agricultural Land Commission*
- *Sharon Tartaglia, Planner – District of West Kelowna*
- *Marcy Marcotte, Councillor- Cowichan Valley Regional District*

Panelists were given two minutes each to respond to prepared and participant questions such as:

- Identify two ways you feel a local government can improve their AAC's effectiveness.
 - Update regional agricultural plans
 - Consistent referrals
 - Engage early and often
- What advice would you give to a new AAC with brand new volunteers starting out this term looking to strengthen agriculture in their communities through the local government planning process?
 - Lateral consultation
 - Work closely with the board/council
 - Education and awareness to people living in or near the ALR
- In your opinion, what land use planning strategy related to agriculture should local governments address in this term in order to protect farmland (if they haven't done so already)?
 - Clarifying regulations for multiple residences in the ALR
 - Regional agriculture plan completion and implementation
 - Setbacks for residential buildings and home plate bylaw
 - Water use and efficiency on farmland
- Is there anything you wish strengthening farming program staff, regional agrologists or local government land use planners could do to better to serve the needs of an AAC?
 - Template terms of reference for qualified people (such as P.Ag)
 - Compliance and enforcement staff and better training for all staff
 - Better mapping tools and resources for applicants
 - Contact ALC planners to attend meetings and answer questions

6.0 SHOWCASING LOCAL FOOD

During the nutrition breaks, participants were encouraged to taste test a variety of BC agricultural products including organic Amborisa apples; turkey and beef pepperoni; honey products and dried pears. Products were sourced directly from local producers and provided a welcome alternative to catered baked goods typically found at conferences and workshops.

7.0 WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

116 participants attended the 2015 workshop representing each planning region in the province.

Representing	Participant
Agricultural Land Commission	Gordon Bednard
Agricultural Land Commission	Tony Pellett
Agricultural Land Commission	Martin Collins
Agricultural Land Commission	Shaundehl Runka
Agricultural Land Commission	Liz Sutton
Agricultural Land Commission	Ron Wallace
Agricultural Land Commission	Lindsay McCoubrey
Agricultural Land Commission	Laurel Eyton
Agricultural Land Commission	Celeste Barlow
Agricultural Land Commission	Brian Underhill
Agricultural Land Commission	Richard Bullock
Agricultural Land Commission	Gordon McCallum
BC Agriculture Council	Reg Ens
BC Farm Industry Review Board	Wanda Gorsuch
BC Farm Industry Review Board	Gloria Chojnacki
BC Food Systems Network	Brent Mansfield
Cariboo Regional District	Karen Moores
City of Abbotsford	Alexandria Mitchell
City of Chilliwack	Chris Kloot
City of Chilliwack	Sue Attrill
City of Chilliwack	Bret Payne
City of Chilliwack	Gillian Villeneuve
City of Kamloops	Maren Luciani
City of Maple Ridge	*Diana Hall
City of Maple Ridge	Siobhan Murphy
City of Maple Ridge	Michelle Baski
City of Maple Ridge	Kiersten Duncan
City of Pitt Meadows	Mike Manion
City of Pitt Meadows	Janice Elkerton
City of Pitt Meadows	Anne Berry
City of Richmond	Amil Alidina
City of Richmond	Minhee Park

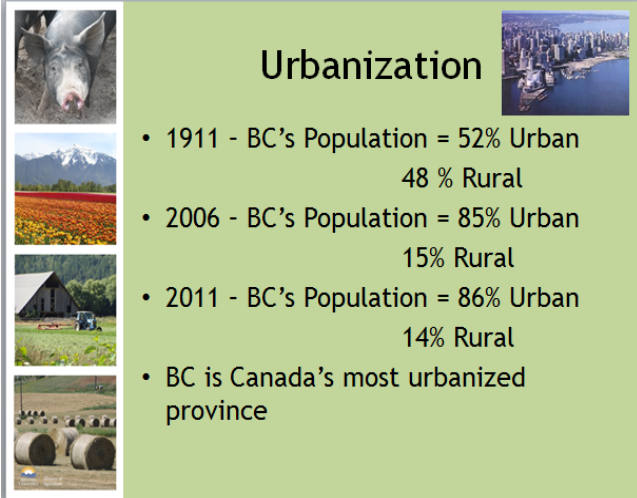
City of Richmond	Terry Crowe
City of Surrey	Jatinder Sandhar
City of Surrey	Carla Stewart
City of Surrey	Markus Kischnick
City of Surrey	Mike Bose
Columbia Shuswap Regional District	Gerald Christie
Comox Valley Regional District	Kent Leontowich
Corporation of Delta	Alex Cauduro
Corporation of Delta	George Harvie
Corporation of Delta	Ian Paton
Corporation of Delta	Marcy Sangret
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Blaine Hardie
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Bob Crawford
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Kathy Lachman
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Mary Marcotte
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Shari Paterson
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Dan Ferguson
CTQ Consultants	Ed Grifone
District of Kent	Darcy Kohuch
District of Kent	Laurens van Vliet
District of Kent	Susan Spaeti
District of Kent	Tom Baldwin
District of West Kelowna	Claude Drought
District of West Kelowna	Jennay Oliver
District of West Kelowna	Sharon Tartaglia
District of West Kelowna	Sheri Paynter
Fraser Valley Regional District	Alison Stewart
Gabriola Local Trust Committee	Eric Veale
Kwantlen University	Cornelia Sussmann
Kwantlen University	Kent Mullinix
Metro Vancouver	Daryl Arnold
Metro Vancouver	Linda Delli Santi
Metro Vancouver	Lorraine Bissett
Metro Vancouver	Theresa Duynstee
Ministry of Agriculture	Gregory Bartle
Ministry of Agriculture	Dieter Geesing
Ministry of Agriculture	Geneve Jasper
Ministry of Agriculture	Carl Withler
Ministry of Agriculture	Kim Sutherland
Ministry of Agriculture	Darrell Smith
Ministry of Agriculture	Wayne Haddow
Ministry of Agriculture	Grant Thompson
Ministry of Agriculture	Sonja Zupanec
Ministry of Agriculture	Alison Fox
Ministry of Agriculture	Jill Hadfield

Ministry of Agriculture	Tim Prisiak
Ministry of Agriculture	Norm Letnick
Ministry of Agriculture	Tim Prisiak
Ministry of Agriculture	Chris Zabek
Ministry of Agriculture	Lori Vickers
Ministry of Agriculture	Orlando Schmidt
Ministry of Agriculture	Brenda Lennox
Ministry of Agriculture	Blaine Recksiedler
Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development	Danielle Lukovich
Missin City Farmer's Market	Roger Dowker
Mission Food Access Network	Brenda Maag
North Saanich	Rob Buchan
Peace River Regional District	Jill Copes
Peace River Regional District	Leonard Hiebert
Powell River Regional District	Pat Hanson
Real Estate Foundation of BC	David Hendrickson
Regional District Fraser Fort George	Marissa Nightingale
Regional District of Nanaimo	Catherine Watson
Regional District of Nanaimo	Greg Keller
Regional District of Nanaimo	Mayta Ryn
Regional District of North Okanagan	Dennis Lapierre
Regional District of North Okanagan	Mike Randell
Squamish Lillooet Regional District	Claire Daniels
Sunshine Coast Regional District	Gregory Gebka
Township of Langley	Bill Ulrich
Township of Langley	David Melnychuck
Township of Langley	David Paton
Township of Langley	Jason Chu
Township of Langley	John Claus
Township of Langley	Melisa Gunn
Township of Spallumcheen	Ed Hanoski
University of British Columbia	Lisa Powell
University of British Columbia	Donna Senese
University of Northern BC	David Connell
University of Northern BC	Katelan Eistetter
University of Northern BC	Lou-Anne Daoust-Filiatrault
Vancouver Island University	Jenny Horn
Vancouver Island University	Pam Shaw

8.0 REFERENCE MATERIALS


Participants were each given a 'Strengthening Farming' USB flash drive pre-loaded with AAC resource materials relevant to the workshop. These resources are all available from the Ministry of Agriculture [Strengthening Farming webpage](#). Presenter slides, where available are included in this section of the summary of proceedings for future reference.

8.1 Presenter Slides – Topic 1



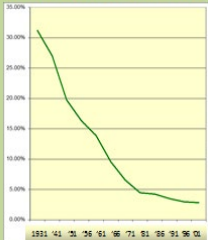
Urbanization

- 1911 - BC's Population = 52% Urban
48 % Rural
- 2006 - BC's Population = 85% Urban
15% Rural
- 2011 - BC's Population = 86% Urban
14% Rural
- BC is Canada's most urbanized province

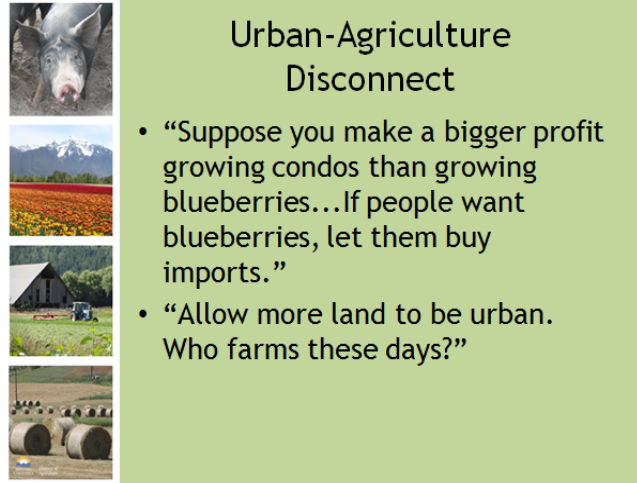


Canadian Farm Population

- Click to add text




BC Farm Population
2011 = 1.5%




Urban-Agriculture Disconnect

- “Suppose you make a bigger profit growing condos than growing blueberries...If people want blueberries, let them buy imports.”
- “Allow more land to be urban. Who farms these days?”



Vacant Land?





How can we get reconnected?

- Strengthening Farming Program
 - working with local governments and the 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.



Strengthening Farming

- Farm Practices Protection
- Planning for Agriculture
 - Agricultural Advisory Committees
 - Agricultural Area Plans
 - Land Use Inventories & GIS
 - Edge Planning

8.2 Presenter Slides – Topic 3

Ministry of Agriculture

A Ministry update on:

Medical Marihuana Production Facilities in the ALR

- Context
- Process
- Proposed Bylaw Standard
- Key Message
- Discussion

Strengthening Farming Program
2015 AAC Workshop
February 18, 2015

Ministry of Agriculture

1. Context

- Canadian Courts require that Canadians must have reasonable access to a legal source of medicinal marihuana.
- 2001 - Health Canada introduces its Marihuana Medical Access Regulation (MMAR).
- 2013 - Health Canada introduces its Marihuana for Medical Purposes Regulations (MMPR) with the intention to phase out the MMAR.
- 2014 - the Agricultural Land Commission (January Bulletin) states that the growing of medicinal marihuana in the Agricultural Land Reserve should be considered a 'farm use' and subject as such to the ALC Act.
- 2014 - in June the BC Government announces that local governments should not prohibit medical marihuana in the ALR.
- At the same time it was announced that the Ministry of Agriculture would draft a Minister's Bylaw Standard to guide local government bylaw development in farming areas. (As authorized under Section 916 of LGA)
- So... the Bylaw Standard is for Medical Marihuana Production Facilities (MMPF) licensed by Health Canada's MMPR and located in the ALR.
- It's NOT about where local governments should permit MMPFs to operate outside of the ALR (i.e. industrial zones) or recreational marihuana.

Ministry of Agriculture

2. Process

START Dates	Action Items
July 2014	Develop draft Discussion Paper (3 weeks) COMPLETE
August 2014	Circulate the draft Discussion Paper to internal stakeholders for review. (3 weeks) COMPLETE
September 2014	Review feedback and prepare required revisions. (2 weeks) COMPLETE
September 2014	Circulate the revised Discussion Paper to external stakeholders for review and consultation. Record feedback. (6 weeks) COMPLETE
October 2014	Compile and review results of feedback. COMPLETE
November 2014	Prepare final revisions. COMPLETE
February, 2015	Submit Discussion Paper to Minister for decision. IN PROGRESS
	Release document to local governments and update the Ministry's Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas. Encouraging local governments to adopt and apply as policy or regulation.

We are here →

List of stakeholders:

- Local governments;
- The BC Agriculture Council;
- Agricultural Land Commission staff;
- The Canadian National Medical Marijuana Association;
- The Canadian Medical Cannabis Industry Association;
- Health Canada; and
- Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development staff.

Key Steps:

- Developing the initial set of criteria by ministry staff for review by stakeholders: COMPLETE
- Consulting with internal and external stakeholders and receiving feedback: COMPLETE
- Revising criteria to develop the final Bylaw Standard: COMPLETE
- Receiving approval by the Minister; and, IN PROGRESS
- Encouraging local governments to adopt and apply as policy or regulation.

Ministry of Agriculture

3. Proposed Bylaw Standard

Subject	Proposed provision to apply to MMPFs	Implications
Local Government Bylaw Standard		
Minimum Lot Size	No minimum lot size	Same as other commodities
Lot Coverage	35% lot coverage maximum	Same as other commodities except greenhouses
Stormwater and Agricultural Liquid Waste management Plans	If the total impervious area of farm buildings and structures exceed 3700 m ² (approx. 40,000 ft ²) or covers more than 10% of lot a plan is required	Same as other commodities
Height Limitations	15 metre maximum building height	Same as other commodities
Building Setbacks	15 to 30 metre maximum building setbacks from property lot lines for MMPFs	Same as livestock buildings
Setbacks from Watercourses	30 metre setback from any watercourse	Same as livestock buildings
Business license	Required to operate NEW to BYLAW GUIDE	Often required by local governments for on-farm retail sales
'Farm Bylaw' Standard		
Farm-side 'Edge Planning'	100 metre maximum building setback from urban/ALR boundary	Must be a regulated local government implementing urban-side edge planning

- The 'Bylaw Guide' is AGRI's 'Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas'
- The Bylaw Standard does not include setbacks from schools, parks, or residential areas

4. Key Message

Do your local government bylaw provisions currently match with the Bylaw Standard criteria?

Ministry staff ask that a review and amendment of these bylaw provisions be completed to ensure that 1) **they do not prohibit licensed medical marihuana production from the ALR** and that 2) **they are consistent with the proposed Bylaw Standard.**

➤ POINT: If a REZONING is required with approval by a Council or Board for a MMPF in the ALR, then it is prohibiting MMPFs in the ALR.

➤ The Bylaw Standard is anticipated to be announced by the Province soon.

5. Discussion

- Questions?
- Contacts for further questions or comments:
 - AGRI-TEAM Regional Agrolgist:**
 - Toll-free for South Coast and Vancouver Island: 1-888-221-7141
 - Toll-free for Interior and Northern BC: 1-800-334-3011
 - AGRI-TEAM Land Use Planner:**
 - Gregory Bartle, Land Use Planner:
 - ph 250 387-9687, Gregory.Bartle@gov.bc.ca

8.3 Presenter Slides – Topic 4



An AAC Wish List: How can we assist AACs over the next 4 years?

What's working with your AAC and what are some of your challenges?

- What specifically is going well?
- What problems are you facing?
- What would you change to make it better?



How do you measure how you're doing?

- How do you know you're succeeding?
- What are some ideas that help you know you're doing well?
 - Is there a staff liaison who provides information?
 - What kind of feedback do you get and do you track it?
 - What kind of administrative/communication process do you have?

How do you recruit new members to your AAC?

- Is the AAC involved or just Local Government?
 - Do they have to be farmers?
 - Is farming supported in the ALR? non-farming activities?
- What is the biggest challenge you've faced?



What resources would be helpful?

- What types of things are you currently being asked to do?
 - Is your AAC tasked with implementing an Agricultural Area Plan?
 - Are you only asked to comment on ALR activities?
 - What other activities are you asked to provide comments on?



Do you want to implement an AAC in your community?

- Is there anyone here looking to start an AAC?
 - What were some barriers to starting an AAC in your community?
 - Have you started an AAC but it is inactive, reasons why?