



# FIRST NATIONS AGRICULTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENT



*PREPARED BY*

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## **Disclaimer**

The *First Nations Agriculture Needs Assessment* has been created as a resource for guidance to the BC Ministry of Agriculture's First Nations Agriculture Business Development initiative and other interested parties in their work to support agriculture business development with First Nations.

This document is a record of process and responses provided by First Nations throughout BC indicating needs to support First Nations agriculture business development. It is not intended to indicate case-specific needs but rather provide a broad snapshot of the current level of agri-food activity, interest, and needs expressed by First Nations Communities in BC.

Reasonable efforts were made to ensure that information relayed in this document are accurate and current, but this does not guarantee that it is accurate or current. Edits to raw content from meeting notes were made to ensure anonymity while maintaining content. Under no circumstances is the Government of Canada, BC Ministry of Agriculture, or Western Regional Management Team (consultant supporting needs assessment process) or any other contributors or organizations that introduce these materials, liable to any person or business for anything that may result from the use of any of the information contained in this document.

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## **Executive Summary**

This report outlines the First Nations Agriculture Needs Assessment carried out by the BC Ministry of Agriculture's First Nations Agri-food Business Development program funded under *Growing Forward*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

The objective of the assessment was to capture what agricultural activities First Nations individuals and communities are currently involved in, which activities they would like to pursue, and what resources and actions need to take place to support future agricultural development.

The First Nations Agriculture Needs Assessment process was initiated in December, 2010. Input received between January 2010 and April 2011 from 47 community meetings and additional written survey responses contributed to the main component of this assessment. Additional content to this needs assessment took place through an analysis of responses to a call for Letters of Intent to the Aboriginal Agriculture Initiative in July 2012 and meetings with First Nations delegates attending Aboriginal Business Match 2012 in February 2012.

Results show that there is a significant amount of agriculture and many various related activities occurring in First Nations communities throughout BC. There is strong interest and the need for support of these activities to help these communities grow and develop towards the goals of self-sufficiency and economic development.

The most common existing agricultural and related activities within the First Nations communities were forage production, gardening and traditional food gathering, while horticulture- including greenhouse production, pursuits related to traditional plants, chickens and small scale food processing- were the most commonly cited interests for future development.

The availability of land, labor and traditional knowledge and skills of elders were most commonly cited as resources currently available to contribute to agricultural development. While land is available, administrative barriers or lack of mechanisms in place for individuals to utilize land on Reserve were sometimes cited as obstacles for agricultural development.

Access to capital and resources, business management support and skills training through extension programs were the most commonly cited needs for pursuing and growing agricultural activities in First Nations communities.

Communities were similar in their views of the benefits coming from agriculture or food processing activities with the most common being the ability to provide food for the community and promote self-sufficiency, building pride and economic development. There was nearly a unanimous response that First Nations youth could play a role in developing agriculture.

The results of this needs assessment will be used to guide future program and work plan development within the BC Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that the First Nations Agriculture Program accurately represents the current interests, needs and goals of the agricultural sector in First Nations communities.



**Figure** Community Harvest Day at one rural BC First Nations community. The initial goal of this particular horticulture project is to provide food for the immediate community.

## Background

The British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture conducted an Agriculture Needs Assessment of First Nations communities and individuals across BC from December 2010 to March 2011 as part of the First Nations Agri-food Business Development Program funded under *Growing Forward*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The objective of the assessment was to capture agricultural activities that First Nations individuals and communities are currently involved in, which activities they would like to pursue, and what resources and actions need to take place to support future agricultural development.

Led by BC Ministry of Agriculture staff, with the assistance of consultants, input was gathered from targeted groups and individuals through community meetings and by mail-out and email questionnaires. The First Nations team and contractors involved include:

- Brian Harper (First Nations Agrologist - Vernon)
- Erica Nitchie (First Nations Agrologist - Williams Lake)
- Shelley Kirk (Agrologist - Fort St. John)
- Julie Robinson (Agrologist - Fort St. John)
- Greg Tegart (Regional Manager - Vernon)
- George Geldart (Manager, Agri-food Business Development)
- Martin Sills (Agrologist - Williams Lake)
- Sue Wilkie (Office Services Supervisor - Vernon)
- Western Regional Management Team (First Nations Agriculture Association)
  - Jammi Kumar
  - Wray McDonnell
  - Lorraine Thomas, Vancouver Island Heritage Food Service Cooperative

The results of this needs assessment will be used to guide future program and work plan development within the BC Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that the First Nations Agriculture Program accurately represents the current interests, needs and goals of the agricultural sector in First Nations communities.

## Methodology

### *Information Gathering and Collection*

BC Ministry of Agriculture staff and support contractors held in-person meetings throughout the province. An informational letter outlining this process was sent to 33 Tribal organizations in December 2010. Forty-seven meetings were held in total between January 2011 and March 2011 (see Appendix 1 for detail). The 47 in-person meetings included participants from 74 different First Nations communities; approximately 37% of all First Nations communities in BC.

In-person meetings were the preferred mechanism of gathering input for the Needs Assessment. Meetings were promoted through posters, community newsletters, word-of-mouth, and advertisements (faxed, mailed or e-mailed).

Written surveys were distributed at in-person meetings, electronically through e-mail and through a province-wide mail out. Every First Nations community in British Columbia was sent a Needs Assessment package including a letter outlining the process, three surveys and a postage-paid return envelope. Forty-seven responses were received from the mail out.

Information collected was based on the following seven questions:

1. *What agricultural activities are currently taking place in your community?*
2. *What agricultural resources (knowledge, infrastructure etc.) currently exist in your community?*
3. *What agricultural enterprises are you interested in pursuing in your community?*
4. *What potential benefits do you see coming from agricultural or food processing activities?*
5. *For agricultural opportunities to grow in your community, what needs to happen?*
6. *Do you see youth playing a role? How do we get them involved?*
7. *Any other comments or suggestions on how the Ministry of Agriculture can better assist you or your community to develop its agricultural potential?*



### ***Information Consolidation***

The discussion and responses received for each of these seven questions from the focus group sessions and completed surveys were compiled and grouped based on the frequency of responses (i.e. how prevalent it was from the community and from individual results). Groupings were then categorized as Common, Semi-Common and Least Common. As such, these results reflect an aggregate summary across BC and do not reflect specific geographic or regional differences. In some meetings, where a more informal process was used, information gathered was amalgamated into the question format used in the summary. This draft of the First Nations Needs Assessment report has been sent to all communities and individuals who participated to request input and feedback. Any comments received have been incorporated into this Needs Assessment Report.

The results are presented in the following tables.

**Question 1: *What agricultural activities are currently taking place in your community?***

(Interest in agriculture exists in varying degrees and forms across the province )

[illegible]

Least Common	Comments
<b>Agroforestry</b>  <b>Non-timber forest resources/wildcrafting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialty products including birch syrup and 'licorice'</li> </ul> <b>Food processing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To compliment inland commercial fishing licenses</li> </ul>	<i>Inland commercial salmon fishery existing in interior/lower mainland</i>



**Figure :** This community garden is an example of one of the semi-commonly cited responses of agricultural activity currently occurring in First Nations communities across BC.

**Question 2: *What agricultural resources (knowledge, infrastructure etc.) currently exist in your community?***

Common	Comments
<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land</li> <li>• Labour</li> <li>• Limited machinery</li> <li>• Livestock</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Existing market opportunities (local)</li> <li>• Desire to consume local foods</li> </ul> <b>Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional knowledge of elders</li> <li>• Knowledge of food preservation (ex.canning)</li> <li>• Historic training</li> <li>• Traditional wildcrafting knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Strong availability of labor - people with some interest in living from the land</li> </ul>	<p><i>Land was commonly cited as a resource but often with limitations: lack of access, restrictions or lack of legal or formal instruments such as proper leases to enable bands or individuals to use lands for agricultural development.</i></p> <p><i>Infrastructure included items such as ranch buildings, storage sheds and barns.</i></p> <p><i>Infrastructure and machinery was in varying degrees of condition.</i></p> <p><i>Most communities had a local store that locally produced foods could possibly be sold at.</i></p> <p><i>Many people currently preserve produce through various methods including canning. Some preservation is done through social or health programs.</i></p> <p><i>In some communities it was noted that traditional knowledge and wildcrafting skills were being lost over time.</i></p> <p><i>Available labour was noted as a potential in-kind contribution to agricultural projects.</i></p>
Semi-Common	
<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrigation (equipment)</li> <li>• Livestock (beef)</li> <li>• Irrigation rights/licenses</li> <li>• Commercial kitchens</li> <li>• Grazing tenures</li> <li>• Fencing</li> </ul> <b>Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General production skills/knowledge</li> <li>• General business management skills</li> <li>• Knowledge of food processing (other than canning)</li> <li>• Local 'food related' network of individuals to support agriculture and link to potential mentors</li> <li>• Some mechanical repair skills</li> <li>• Interest in new available agricultural technologies</li> </ul>	<p><i>Some communities have irrigation in good functioning condition while others have irrigation equipment with limited or no current functionality.</i></p>
Least Common	
<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock (other)</li> <li>• Greenhouses</li> <li>• Composting facilities</li> <li>• Substantial farming equipment</li> <li>• Band financial resources</li> </ul>	
Least Common	Comments



**Skills**

- Individuals with substantial production, business management
- Knowledge of fish production
- Mechanism in place for negotiating tenures/agreements at a higher level (ie. Nation level)



**Figure** An example of agricultural land on Indian Reserve where irrigation could substantially increase yields.

**Question 3: *What agricultural enterprises are you interested in pursuing in your community?***

Common	Comments
<b>Livestock</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chickens</li> </ul> <b>Horticulture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vegetables</li> <li>Fruit</li> <li>Berries</li> <li>Individual/community gardens</li> <li>Greenhouses</li> </ul> <b>Non-timber forest resources and wildcrafting (ex. mushrooms, berries, medicinal plants)</b> <b>Forage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>re-planting</li> <li>new seeding</li> </ul> <b>Food processing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>small scale canning/jams</li> </ul>	<p><i>Many participants cited interest in small scale production and processing/preservation, providing food products to their family and/or local community.</i></p> <p><i>Interest in forage was for both local domestic livestock (including horses) and for commercial sale off-Reserve.</i></p>
Semi-Common	
<b>Livestock</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beef</li> </ul> <b>Horticulture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial market gardens</li> <li>Tree fruit crops</li> <li>Domestic berries</li> </ul> <b>Retail of farm products (store)</b> <b>Food processing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>smoke houses</li> </ul>	
Least Common	
<b>Livestock</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grass fed beef</li> <li>Dairy cows for milk and associated products</li> <li>Bison</li> <li>Sheep</li> <li>Pigs</li> </ul>	

Least Common	Comments
<p><b>Horticulture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bedding Plants</li> <li>• Tree and Plant nurseries to service reclamation industry</li> <li>• Horticultural production of wild species for landscaping</li> <li>• Heirloom seed production</li> <li>• Value-added vegetable production (ex. fries)</li> <li>• Wild Rice</li> <li>• Floriculture</li> </ul> <p><b>Silviculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree Nursery</li> </ul> <p><b>Winery</b></p> <p><b>Skills Development/training centre/agricultural business development mentorship</b></p> <p><b>Processing agriculture waste</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composting</li> <li>• Bioenergy</li> </ul> <p><b>Wildcrafting/processing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medicinal plants</li> <li>• New business and expansion of existing small business</li> </ul> <p><b>Food Processing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inland commercial fishing licenses (salmon/freshwater)</li> <li>• Dehydration</li> </ul> <p><b>Agri-tourism</b></p>	

**Question 4: *What potential benefits do you see coming from agricultural or food processing activities?***

*Note: The comments for this question were more consistent across communities.*

Common	Comments
<p><b>Being able to provide for self and/or the community (self-sufficiency)</b></p> <p><b>Youth involvement/engagement</b></p> <p><b>Building capacity</b></p> <p><b>Pride (sense of pride and ownership)</b></p> <p><b>Confidence</b></p> <p><b>Improved health benefits</b></p> <p><b>Active living (exercise)</b></p> <p><b>Jobs and skill development</b></p> <p><b>Economic development and creating an economic base on-Reserve</b></p> <p><b>Source of revenue (individual or community)</b></p> <p><b>Information transfer/building/developing knowledge that can be passed on</b></p>	
Semi-Common	
<p><b>Opportunities for trading of products within community or with others</b></p> <p><b>Lifestyle (traditional, working from home)</b></p> <p><b>Community building</b></p> <p><b>Putting idle land into production</b></p> <p><b>First Nations remain stewards of their land</b></p> <p><b>Developing work ethic</b></p> <p><b>Reducing the need to drive (cost of fuel and greenhouse gas emissions)</b></p>	<p><i>Reducing the need to drive to purchase food was a more common response in remote communities.</i></p>



<p><b>More affordable to buy fresh produce</b></p> <p><b>More use of Reserve lands by Certificate of Possession (CP) holders</b></p> <p><b>Links to other communities, opportunities for people to come together to volunteer and work together</b></p>	
<b>Least Common</b>	
<b>No Responses in Category</b>	



**Figure** Pride was suggested as one of the main benefits that people saw coming from agricultural activities.

**Question 5: For agricultural opportunities to grow in your community what needs to happen?**

Most Common	Comments
<p><b>Access to capital</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start-up funding for communities (e.g. community gardens, training)</li> <li>• General funding for individual business opportunities including planning</li> <li>• Enterprise development and expansion</li> <li>• Venture capital</li> <li>• Core funding for on-the-ground projects including management.</li> </ul> <p><b>Labour and skills development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual business plans/feasibility studies (assistance with)</li> <li>• Skills and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Information on starting a new enterprise (proper arrangements, useful procedures, legal issues, accounting, etc)</li> <li>-Extension and workshops- enhancing fundamental knowledge of crop and livestock production</li> <li>-Succession planning (including link to the need for wills and proper legal instruments applicable to on-Reserve land use)</li> <li>-Ministry of Agriculture support (knowledge access and transfer for production, business, marketing)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Information on marketing (identify what there is a demand for)</li> <li>• Information on food safety labeling &amp; processing requirements</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy skill development</li> </ul> <p><b>Access to land</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to make use of the land</li> <li>• Clear title or lease to land and water. A more streamlined and timely leasing process</li> <li>• Individual commitment</li> <li>• More community support</li> <li>• Education and awareness</li> <li>• Fencing</li> <li>• Buildings (incl. storage)</li> <li>• Equipment</li> </ul> <p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fencing</li> <li>• Buildings (incl. storage)</li> <li>• Equipment</li> </ul>	<p><i>Exact responses varied but generally touched all of these topics.</i></p> <p><i>In some instances individuals wanting land who did not have a specific plot designated that they can use.</i></p> <p><i>Fencing to manage livestock or to protect crops, may also have been reflected in access to capital.</i></p>
Semi-Common	Comments

<p><b>Separate internal politics from agricultural business endeavors</b></p> <p><b>Access to grazing tenure</b></p> <p><b>Need for a community agriculture plan to set priorities and steps (strategic plan)</b></p> <p><b>Chief and Band support/social/political support (internal)</b></p> <p><b>Leadership development</b></p> <p><b>A coordinator for agriculture (champion) paid position</b></p> <p><b>Water access/water use planning</b></p> <p><b>Processing infrastructure (community kitchens/dehydrators)</b></p> <p><b>Value-chain development</b></p> <p><b>Support for traditional food development, especially in areas with limited agricultural interest or opportunities</b></p>	<p><i>The desire to separate politics from agricultural endeavors was more common in communities pursuing commercial production.</i></p> <p><i>Comments reflected that individual business processes need to be managed separately from band administration</i></p> <p><i>Some communities desire agricultural development plans linked directly to the land and an outline of 'best opportunities'. Others with opportunities currently identified are looking for business-specific plans.</i></p> <p><i>Communities not currently active in agriculture more commonly identified the need to address planning issues prior to access to funding</i></p> <p><i>Interest in "Planning" included the community's desire to access funding to do so an included land use and water planning for agriculture and associated capacity building.</i></p> <p><i>Interest in water-use planning was more common suggestion in areas affected by drought conditions</i></p> <p><i>In some communities where individual entrepreneurs were more common.</i></p> <p><i>Suggestion to use the existing Black Creek Ranch beef value chain model and apply it to other products.</i></p>
<b>Least Common</b>	
<p><b>'ALR' type designation on First Nations lands</b></p> <p><b>More community support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey work within community to identify interests</li> <li>• Linking interested people to right project(s)</li> </ul> <p><b>Youth engagement and interest in agriculture</b></p> <p><b>Pooling/cooperative to access market</b></p> <p><b>Product innovation support</b></p> <p><b>Food science assistance</b></p> <p><b>Co-operation and communication with forestry licensees to protect and/or enhance wild product potential</b></p>	

**Question 6: Do you see youth playing a role? How do we get them involved?**

Common	Comments
<p><b>Promote involvement in community gardens</b></p> <p><b>Creating a fun environment</b></p> <p><b>Wage subsidy for youth working in agriculture (summer student program)</b></p> <p><b>Mentorship of youth by elders or other individuals involved in agriculture</b></p> <p><b>Have parents and leadership lead by example and provide support</b></p>	
Semi-Common	
<p><b>Career days in school (agriculture)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture at career fairs</li> </ul> <p><b>Ag in the Classroom (worm bins, school gardens)</b></p> <p><b>Train youth on equipment (e.g. FARSHA tractor safety training)</b></p> <p><b>Information on and connection to 4-H</b></p>	<p><i>Limited awareness of 4-H in some communities.</i></p>
Least Common	
<p><b>Facebook page for 4-H</b></p> <p><b>Take advantage of work experience hour requirements with high schools</b></p> <p><b>Youth horse therapy program</b></p> <p><b>Farm visit/work exchange program</b></p>	

**Question 7: Any other comments or suggestions on how the Ministry of Agriculture can better assist you or your community to develop its agricultural potential?**

Common	Comments
<p><b>Agricultural extension services (local extension support)</b></p> <p><b>Access to a First Nations Agrologist</b></p> <p><b>Bands and communities need information on where to access help (factsheet on offices, phone numbers, where to get soil testing, who is the berry specialist, etc.)</b></p> <p><b>Provide training/funding to support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator coordinator training (project management)</li> <li>• Core funding for staff</li> </ul>	<p><i>It was noted that having extension services closer to communities would be helpful. Some communities were familiar with First Nations Agrologists while others were not.</i></p>
Semi-Common	
<p><b>Establish a generic business planning template/guide</b></p> <p><b>Land capability assessments</b></p>	
Least Common	
<p><b>Provide funding for demonstration projects</b></p> <p><b>The social and health aspect of FN agricultural development needs to be recognized in addition to the business focus (referring to the <i>Growing Forward</i> Agreement)</b></p> <p><b>Government should provide a low-interest loan for agriculture</b></p> <p><b>Provide a funding booklet</b></p> <p><b>Provide money directly to communities</b></p> <p><b>Establish a BC advisory board for First Nations agriculture</b></p> <p><b>Form a Vancouver Island First Nations Advisory Committee</b></p>	

## **Additional Information**

Beyond the Needs Assessment community meetings and surveys, two other recent initiatives have enabled an additional capture of where interest and needs lie for First Nations agriculture in British Columbia: the Strategic Partnership's Aboriginal Agriculture Initiative call for proposals in July 2011, and the Aboriginal Business Match 2012 conference held in Prince George BC, February 13-16.

### **Strategic Partnership Initiative – Aboriginal Agriculture Initiative**

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) partnered through the Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI), which stems from the Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development, to develop the Aboriginal Agriculture Initiatives (AAI).

The objective of the SPI-AAI is to increase economic development opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians within the agriculture and agri-product sector. This is to be achieved through: planned and integrated economic development activities; the identification of economic and business opportunities; capacity building; investment in economic infrastructure; the creation and expansion of viable businesses; and investments and partnerships in economic and resource opportunities. The AAI is being piloted in three provinces: Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia (BC).

The SPI-AAI in British Columbia (BC) is being led by AAFC in collaboration with other federal departments, the provincial government and Aboriginal representatives through a Regional Implementation Team. In July 2011, the Team released a request for Letters of Intent (LOIs). Sixty-nine (69) BC First Nations communities or businesses submitted Letters of Intent to the Aboriginal Agriculture Initiative. The following is a summary of the interests and needs presented through the process.

#### **General Focus:**

- 54% (37 LOIs) mentioned garden, field vegetable or greenhouse production. More specifically, 20% (14) expressed interest in greenhouse development opportunities. At least 6 of these communities could also be considered remote, in the sense that there is limited road access or that access to produce is very expensive and the condition of the produce is not fresh, given transportation costs and time.

- 20% (14) focused on or had some mention of traditional plants including non-timber forest products, agroforestry systems and related value-added endeavors.
- 9% (6) mentioned forage production.
- 7% (5) focused on nursery production of native plants or trees.
- 4% (3) mentioned beef production.
- Water availability and management can be a critical aspect of agricultural development. This is especially true with respect to production in the interior of BC. 4% (3) cited interest or need for water management and irrigation.
- 3% (2) focused on some sort of waste-management (i.e. industrial composting).
- 6% (4) were related to fish (aquaculture, fish processing etc.). Interest in aquaculture development was also expressed in numerous questions to program officers in developing LOIs but, as it was not eligible for AAI, LOIs were not submitted.

**Business development:**

- 23% (16) had significant mention of a planning component (land use planning, strategic agriculture planning, feasibility and business analysis).  
Of those, 69% (11) projects mentioned feasibility and business analysis specifically.
- 9% (6) had a processing and/or value-added focus.
- 6% (4) included a component related to the development of some sort of co-operative business model.

It should be noted that although the Terms and Conditions of the AAI allowed for large-cost projects (up to \$2 million) the availability of funding between the 3 pilot provinces was much more restricted. This did result in a number of LOIs for large-cost undertakings which provides interesting information of the Aboriginal interests and needs regarding agricultural development in BC.

## **Aboriginal Business Match 2012**

### **February 13-16, 2012, Prince George BC**

Erica Nitchie (BC AGRI) and Janine Gyug (AAFC) attended Aboriginal Business Match 2012 (ABM) in Prince George, February 13-16, 2012. Registration and associated travel costs were covered by *Growing Forward*.

The four day event is a networking and business development conference hosted by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and is designed to be an efficient and cost-effective way for exhibitors to connect with First Nations delegates and vice-versa.

The event brought leaders from over half of all First Nations in BC. Prior to the event, delegates completed an e-profile where they expressed those areas of economic development within their current and future priorities.

- Over 50 registrants listed “Agriculture, Horticulture and Non-timber forest products” within their current and future interests.

Based on e-profile matching, BC AGRI and AAFC met with delegates from 28 First Nations communities and tribal organizations for face-to-face meetings.

#### **From these 28 meetings:**

- **12** expressed significant interest in **land planning support for agriculture**. Land use planning for agriculture should be viewed as a key component in realizing First Nations Agriculture business development opportunities.
- **11** First Nations communities have **community gardens that they are looking to expand to become self-supporting**.  
All 11 are interested in receiving the **Community Garden Recordkeeping Toolkit** upon its release.
- **10** are looking for agricultural business development planning support and would like to be considered for a **First Nations Agriculture Opportunities Assessment if offered in 2012/13**.
- **4** currently **lease agricultural land** to external operators.
- **2** are currently involved in or working towards **value-added** opportunities with wild harvested products.



## Results and Discussion

Currently, there is significant agriculture occurring in First Nations communities throughout BC and there is strong interest in seeing agriculture and related activities grow and develop.

While the questions within the Needs Assessment exercise generated a range of ideas around agricultural enterprises that communities were interested in developing, there was a focus and a priority on providing their own food (70%). To a lesser degree there was interest in direct marketing and value-added opportunities off-Reserve to smaller, local markets (20%), and the expansion of existing enterprises to larger scale commercial enterprises (10%).

In terms of current agricultural resources, the most common responses included the availability of land and labor as well as the traditional knowledge and skills of elders. While land is available, in some cases there are administrative barriers or lack of mechanisms in place for individuals to utilize land on Reserve for agricultural development.

The least common responses for currently existing skills were knowledge around production and business management.

There was a range of responses around the types of agricultural enterprises communities were interested in pursuing and it varied somewhat across the province. However, it appeared that horticultural crops were the most common in general. Other common themes were the desire to use native/traditional plants and the desire to be self-sufficient in food production. The nature of Letters of Intent submitted to the AAI mirror this trend with 54% and 20% of proposals received focusing on horticultural and traditional plants, respectively.

Communities were similar in their views of the benefits coming from agriculture or food processing activities with the most common being the ability to provide food for the community, youth involvement, building pride and economic development. There was almost a unanimous response that First Nations youth could play a role in developing agriculture as well.

With respect to getting agricultural opportunities established in communities, the most common responses for needs were related to access to capital and resources, individual business plans and skills and training through extension programs. Almost one quarter of Letters of Intent to the AAI specifically mentioned a need for planning support.

In terms of general comments and feedback, the most common responses were that communities wanted to see agricultural extension services maintained with access to a First Nations Agrologist. This includes support for training and skill development and demonstration projects.

## Appendices

### *Appendix 1 -Community Meetings*

DATE	Communities Invited	Number of Participants	Facilitator
January 12, 2011	Dog Creek and Esketemc	13	Erica Nitchie
January 13, 2011	Adams Lake and Neskonlith	9	Brian Harper
January 17, 2011	Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Coldwater	7	Brian Harper
January 18, 2011	Bonaparte	8	Brian Harper
January 18, 2011	Skeetchestn	8	Brian Harper
January 20, 2011	Xaxli'p, Pavillion, Lillooet	18	Brian Harper
January 20, 2011	Upper Nicola	16	Brian Harper
January 24, 2011	Penticton	11	Brian Harper
January 25, 2011	Cook's Ferry, Nicomen, Ashcroft	11	Brian Harper
January 26, 2011	Okanagan	24	Brian Harper
January 26, 2011	Kamloops, Simpcw, Whispering Pines	5	Brian Harper
January 26, 2011	Canoe Creek	14	Erica Nitchie
January 28, 2011	Tsilhqot'in National Government (Joint Resources Council)	15	Erica Nitchie
January 28, 2011	Canim Lake Band	20	Erica Nitchie
February 1, 2011	West Moberly (meeting with economic development officer and Ranch Manager, did not express interest in additional community meeting)	2	Shelley Kirk & Julie Robinson
February 2, 2011	Saint Mary's, Lower Kootenay, Tabacco Plains	6	Brian Harper
February 2, 2011	Akisqnuk Shuswao	5	Brian Harper
February 7, 2011	Lytton, Nicomen, Skuppah, Siska, Kanaka Bar	8	Brian Harper
February 7, 2011	Prophet River First Nation	5	Shelley Kirk & Julie Robinson
February 9, 2011	Doig River First Nation (meeting with economic development officer and Ranch Manager)	2	Shelley Kirk & Julie Robinson
February 10, 2011	Osoyoos	9	Brian Harper

February 14, 2011	Upper and Lower Similkameen, Keromeos	0	Brian Harper
February 16, 2011	Tsawwassen	7	WRMT
February 21, 2011	Hupacasath – Port Alberni	21	WRMT
February 28, 2011	K'òmoks First Nations	16	WRMT
February 28, 2011	Saulteau First Nation	6	Shelley Kirk & Julie Robinson
March 1, 2011	Campbell River Band	25	WRMT
March 3, 2011	T'Sou-ke - Sooke	15	WRMT
March 3, 2011	Halalt - Chemanius	21	WRMT
March 4, 2011	Sechelt – Sunshine coast	8	WRMT
March 7, 2011	Kelly Lake Cree Nation (phone call with former chief; unable to schedule community meeting)	1	Shelley Kirk
March 8, 2011	Halfway River First Nation	1	Shelley Kirk & Julie Robinson
March 8, 2011	Gitxsan Government Commission	5	WRMT
March 8, 2011	Gitsegukla – Hazelton	7	WRMT
March 8, 2011	Nak'azdli	16	Erica Nitchie
March 9, 2011	Stellat'en	8	Erica Nitchie
March 9, 2011	Gitwangak - Kitwanga	6	WRMT
March 10, 2011	Blueberry River First Nation	8	Shelley Kirk & Julie Robinson
March 15, 2011	Matsqui - Abbotsford	11	WRMT
March 15, 2011	Esdilagh	3	Erica Nitchie
March 16, 2011	Tsi Del Del	10	Erica Nitchie
March 17, 2011	Sto:lo Nation Community Development – Chilliwack/ Seabird/Skawahlook /Leq'a:mel/Skowkale	11	WRMT
March 18, 2011	Tsawout - Saanich	18	WRMT
March 18, 2011	Nazko	18	Erica Nitchie
March 29, 2011	Gitxsan - Hazelton Glen Vowel/ Kispiox/Gitanmaax/Gitanyow	10	WRMT
March 30, 2011	Terrace	2	WRMT

**Total number of meetings held: 47**

**Total number of participants: 460**