



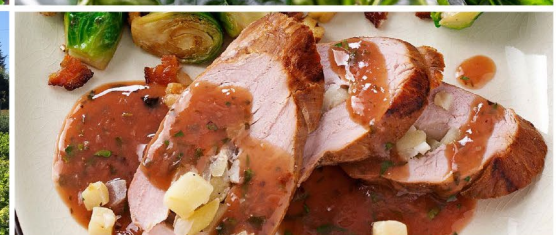
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

BC AGRICULTURE COUNCIL

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BCAC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Stan Vander Waal, Representing Floriculture



I think it is safe to say, this was a year that we will never forget. I'm sure you all have memories from the week of March 9th when the world as we knew it shut down. Personally, our business went from anticipation of our peak season to being told that no flowers would be sold at retailers. We wondered how our family business and employees would survive when our whole year relies on spring sales. Everyone quickly learned that they needed to find a new path through the complexities of COVID-19.

Almost immediately, while many were closing their doors, BC Agriculture Council along with its member associations were actively working with the Government to find solutions. Our goal was to keep British Columbians - and the country - well fed. We broke through issues that normally would seem to be impossible and found innovative solutions to get workers flowing into the country ensuring that work on farms would continue.

BCAC was successful working with our government in creating a "Made in B.C." plan for quarantining out-of-country workers for our farmers. As a farmer who relies on these workers - I was extremely grateful for this initiative! I believe I speak for many of us when I say that looking back, we were facing so many challenges, and yet, the year turned out far better than expected, from a business perspective. However, we think of those whom the pandemic has created severe challenges for and continues to do so.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying public concerns about food security, we have seen government and the public re-evaluate the way they see and value agriculture. This has created an opportunity to build a new vision for the Sector which involves innovative ideas and a shift in perspective. And when thinking about economic recovery, I truly believe in what it means to be part of the Council as I have seen the effectiveness of our associations or organizations as they navigated the impacts of COVID-19. They helped us keep our farms operating.

If there is one thing I know for sure, it's that we - who work in agriculture - show up for one another when times are tough. There is no time like the present to strongly back our farm organizations and collaborate as we work through these post-pandemic times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stan Vander Waal'.

Stan Vander Waal, President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - YEAR IN REVIEW

Reg Ens, BC Agriculture Council



For me, the defining moment for 2020, was sitting in the Ottawa airport in late March after the Canadian Horticulture Council's Annual General Meeting talking to a few Members of Parliament from B.C. who were discussing whether Parliament would be shut down or not. That was the beginning - who could have predicted the way 2020 unfolded? It was this time last year that social distancing became a new concept. How do you work and live in small bubbles? To say that the year was unprecedented is an understatement. But

we, as humans, are adaptable and we adapted. As a sector, we were flexible, and we did what needed to be done. Food security quickly became a trending phrase in the media.

I want to express my incredible gratitude to our team at BCAC, ARDCorp and WALI. Everyone quickly adapted to working remotely and for the most part, taught themselves how to use all the virtual platforms that became a necessity. Most importantly, we continued to support the sector throughout the year, and everyone stayed safe.

I must also recognize AgSafe and their staff for their incredible help in developing the protocols and tools needed to help keep workers safe during the pandemic. Thank you!

TEAM UPDATES

The past year saw a lot of changes to staffing for us. With the departure of Ray O'Farrell who returned to Ireland with his family, we soon welcomed Darren Brown who is now leading ARDCorp's environmental programs. Darren has brought his considerable broad experience to the group and we hope you all will have more opportunities to meet Darren in person very soon.

Family and babies continue being a big part of for the BCAC team. Emma had a beautiful baby boy and is currently on maternity leave. filling her role until August 2021 is Kate Nundal. In October, Danielle returned from maternity leave and in addition to her work in communications and engagement, leading the work on developing a more structured internal policy development process at BCAC.

Melanie, who joined the BCAC Communications Team while Danielle was on maternity leave, had a COVID wedding and moved to Prince George. A big thank you to Melanie for her work and professionalism during the last year and a half. Recognizing that communications is at the core of our organization, we filled Melanie's position with a permanent role that Tristyn MacLeod has been hired for as Communications Coordinator.

What started as a six-month contract, Tatiana Travers joined the WALI team to help employers access temporary foreign workers (TFWs), She is now full-time and has become integral to our TFW support program.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

While labour issues consumed a big part of 2020, we did make progress on other initiatives. Thanks to funding from and a partnership with Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF), BCAC started working on a policy capacity building project. In 2020 the project had two key components; the first was the completion of an economic impact study to gather baseline data about the sector and the second was to commence building policy capacity within BCAC. Historically, BCAC relied on policy development work to be done by either our members or the provincial government. Building BCAC's policy capacity was seen as a key way to improve farmers and ranchers ability to advocate on behalf of the sector.

Since summer of 2020, we have gathered much intelligence from the BCAC membership and other general farm organizations to assist us as we develop broad sector policies. One of the key issues identified during this process was the importance of on-farm programs. The current federal-provincial agreement (Canadian Agriculture Program (CAP)) is entering year 3 of the 5-year program. Given the importance of this work to our members, we began a consultation with our members in more detail to assess how the program is currently impacting farmers and ranchers and what they would like to see in the next agreement. Policy development work will continue into 2021.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A key development at the end of 2020 was the loss of two members. In December, the Society of B.C. Mushroom Growers advised BCAC that they could not pay the outstanding member dues and were withdrawing from membership. Recent consolidation of farm ownership in the mushroom sector had been creating financial pressure on the Society and resulted in their decision.

The BC Salmon Farmers Association gave notice that they would be withdrawing from membership at the end of Q1 2021. The pandemic significantly disrupted international sales of farmed salmon and farms had been selling product below the cost of production. Not long after, the federal government announced the imminent closure of several farms in the Discovery Islands region. The combination of events has resulted in the Association having to significantly reduce operating expenses, which unfortunately, included their membership to BCAC.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to 2021 and beyond, the key focus for the sector will be helping B.C. emerge from the pandemic stronger than before. The focus for BCAC will not be about going back to the way it was, but rather, to go forward with intentional purpose. The disruption of the pandemic has helped us take a step back and build strategic thinking back into our work so we, as a sector, can capitalize on the opportunities we currently have so we can prepare for the challenges yet to come.



Reg Ens, Executive Director
BC Agriculture Council

PROGRAM & SERVICE DELIVERY REPORTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (PUBLIC TRUST):

While the COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges to the agriculture sector, it also resulted in B.C. residents showing an enhanced awareness of food system topics. We increased our virtual presence to meet our primary objective of increasing the public's knowledge and confidence in B.C.'s agriculture sector and food system while continuing to support farmers and ranchers with educational resources. Here are some of 2020's highlights:

We Heart Local BC (WHL BC)

- WHL social media channels reached over 531,000 people in 2020.
- 84% growth in new website viewership.
- BCAC Members helped us create 18 new farmer profiles, 60+ recipes, and 12 blogs.
- Over 6,000 people read our article “5 Things You Didn't Know About Farms in B.C.”
- Farm and Food Care profiled three B.C. farmers in the *Real Dirt on Farming*.
- Continuous updates to the We Heart Local BC website! Visit: www.weheartlocalbc.ca



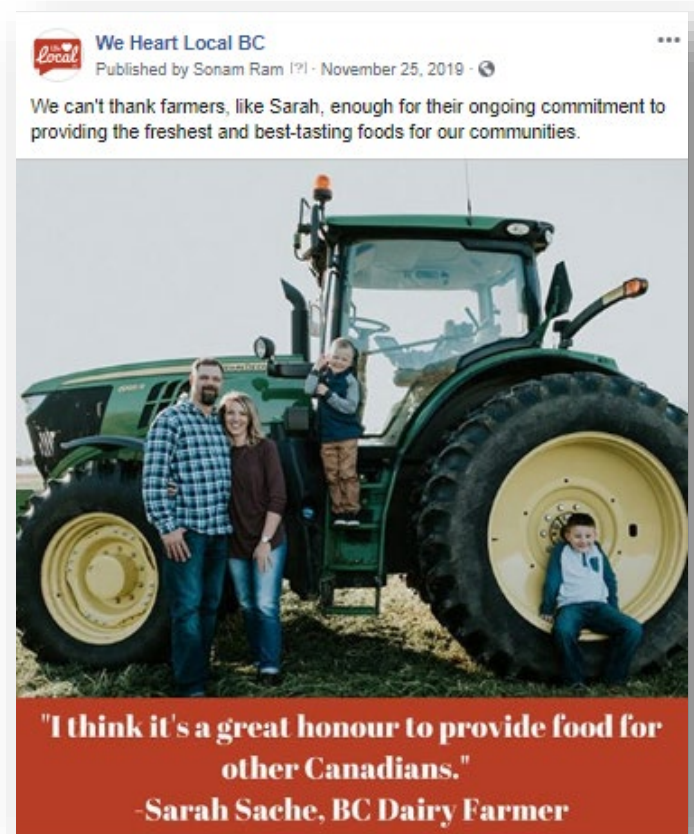
Virtual Farm Tour

In collaboration with BC Dairy and BC Egg, WHL BC facilitated a virtual farm tour for health professionals. Upon completion of the tour, the 35 participants shared having a “very positive” impression of B.C. farmers. Farm tours will continue being a priority area of focus for connecting with the public and plans for an in-person tour late Fall 2021 are in progress.

Consumer Research

Measuring public opinion is an ongoing requirement for measuring our effectiveness. In 2020, new data was collected and when compared to the previous data (2018), there were several positive results. They were:

- Opinions of B.C. farmers remain strong.
- Significant increases in agreement that B.C. farmers are trustworthy, responsible, follow regulations, and treat their workers fairly.
- A 20% increase in consumers who agree that farmers are transparent.
- The public's general level of concern declined when asked about food system and food safety topics implying their level of trust in food production practices has increased.



Producer Workshops

CHAT Communications Workshops continued to improve producer confidence to engage with consumers in matters of public trust. Two workshops were offered in person to the BC Fruit Growers Association in January. Following the onset of COVID, the workshop was converted to a digital format, and an increased focus placed on how to engage in online conversations. Throughout the remainder of the year, four additional workshops were delivered in collaboration with BCAC member associations.

BCAC also secured funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to host a webinar on 'Sharing Your Story' for BC farmers and ranchers. The webinar featured some CHAT communications information from Becky Parker, and other tips from dairy farmer and well-known Advocate, Andrew Campbell. Of those who attended the webinar, 90% agree that the webinar enhanced their knowledge/skills to converse with the public about food and farming.



BC YOUNG FARMERS



**BCYOUNG
FARMERS**

2020 Chair: Leo Quick

2020 Vice-Chair: Rudi Meier

2020 Treasurer: Emma Bryce

BC Young Farmers (BCYF) is a committee under BC Agriculture Council. BCYF assists in the transition of young farmers to board rooms and to owning farms. In social and interactive settings, BCYF members learn leadership skills, explore community development, improve agricultural awareness, explore individual talents and most importantly, meet fellow young farmers. Here are the highlights from 2020:

January - June

- Hosted a booth with BCAC at the Pacific Agriculture Show; added 37 new members.
- Seven BCYF delegates attended the Canadian Young Farmers Forum AGM in PEI;
- The committee welcomed a guest speaker for directors to present on “Robert’s Rules”.
- Two BCYF delegates attended the Canadian Horticulture Council AGM in Ottawa;
- BCYF launched a newsletter to improve direct communication with our members after many in-person events canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Hosted AgSafe webinar
- Began posting diverse and original content on social media for sharing resources from our partners which as a result we have seen a great increase of engagement.
- Hosted a BCAC “CHAT” Communications webinar
- Hosted Farm Rodent Management webinar with UFV speaker.



Canadian Young Farmers Forum 2020 AGM

July - December

- Continued digital outreach and planning for the upcoming virtual Farm Fest in the Fall.
- Hosted Soil Health webinar with UBC speaker; directors participated in two panel webinars.
- Started promoting upcoming Farm Fest events through social media and newsletter.
- Hosted three (first-ever!) virtual Farm Fest events with speakers on mental health (sponsored by FCC), the economic impact of COVID (sponsored by Scotiabank), and innovation in agriculture (sponsored by UFV).
- Sent Christmas brief newsletter.
- Began negotiations for 2021 CAP project.



BC YOUNG FARMERS

ANNUAL

FARM FEST

WILL LOOK A LITTLE DIFFERENT THIS
YEAR!

JOIN US FOR 3 VIRTUAL EVENTS
WITH SPEAKERS, FARM TOURS AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS
CENTERED AROUND THE TOPIC OF RESILIENCE

NOV 18 2020 4:00 - 5:30 PM	NOV 25 2020 4:00 - 5:30 PM	DEC 5 2020 4:00 - 5:30 PM
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Poster from BCYF's 2020 Virtual Farm Fest

FARMER IDENTITY CARD (FID) PROGRAM

2020 Activity Highlights

- Implemented a new online application and database to improve user experience and increase administrative efficiencies.
- Exceeded sales target
- FenceFast joined as our newest affinity program partner. Cardholders can now receive 5% off online purchases and automatic PST exemption at checkout.

Sales Activity

For the second year since developing a new sales and marketing plan, our targets for card sales and revenue saw another increase over previous years. Thank you to our program partners for your continued support and helping us achieve our goals.

REVENUE GROWTH UP

10.2%



TOTAL ACCOUNTS 775

30% NEW



NEW PROGRAM PARTNER

FENCE FAST



Bona Fide Farmer Card
Issued by the BC Agriculture Council
Producer Name
Farm Name
0-32160 South Fraser Way
Sootsford BC, V2T 1W5
EXPIRY DATE: 12/12/12

BCAC
BC AGRICULTURE COUNCIL
Premises ID: BC1234567

WALI

Western Agriculture Labour Initiative



The Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (WALI) is a subsidiary company of BCAC that works with employers and governments to enable employers to find adequate domestic workers, assists employers who require temporary foreign workers (TFW) and improves working conditions for temporary workers. **Here are the highlights from 2020:**

- **EMPLOYER INFO WORKSHOPS** Organized two, Kelowna and Osoyoos in January 2020.
- **COMMUNICATIONS: WALI WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER** Updated the WALI website making it the first stop for employers looking for information on COVID-19 updates and resources. Over the course of the year, the WALI Updates newsletter became a well-known and trusted source of information for the agricultural sector in BC. There are over 1,200 subscribers.
- **HUB CONNECT LAUNCH** April 1, 2020 HUB Connect was officially available for seasonal workers and employers. BCAC's communication department created promotional material which was shared with workers during their 14-day initial quarantine, managed by the Province. Over 2,500 workers received the material.
- **VIDEO COMMUNICATION** Developed 4 videos in Spanish for TFWs:
 - Migrant Workers' Guide to Transportation in BC
 - How to Open a Bank Account in Canada
 - Safety Measures for Farm Workers Handling Pesticides
 - Employment Contracts

This was a partnership project with the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA). Thank you, Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF), for funding this project.

- **CHARTER FLIGHTS** Due to travel restrictions imposed by the Federal Government back in March 2020, WALI and MI Tierra organized charter flights from Mexico, Jamaica, and Guatemala, mobilizing close to 3,000 seasonal workers. The total arrival for SAWP workers in 2020 was 5,887.
- **POLICY CHANGES AND GOVERNMENT** Due to the pandemic, the Federal and B.C. Government enforced many different requirements as well as support for employers of temporary foreign workers: Employer Registry, 14-Day quarantine, financial assistance programs, COVID-19 house inspections, Industrial Camp regulations amongst other. WALI engaged with different

stakeholders advocating for employers' interests and providing critical information in a timely manner.

- **AGSTREAM WALI** has initiated discussions to collaborate with Working Link, a licensed foreign worker recruiter in B.C. as well as the Government of El Salvador.
- **LABOUR MARKET IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LMIA) PROCESSING** As of October 2020, WALI now verifies information on LMIAs with employers and confirms arrival dates (this was done by Mi Tierra in previous years). This change has reduced the processing times in Canada and has enabled much stronger connections with the Mexican Consulate in Vancouver, Ministry of Labour in Mexico and Service Canada. A special thank you to all parties involved in this process.
- **DEVELOPING COVID HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS** BCAC, AgSafe BC and Ministry of Agriculture staff worked with the Ministry of Health to develop and improve on-farm protocols to keep workers, farm families and our communities safe.



ARDCORP

BC Agricultural Research and Development Corporation

As the program delivery agent for BCAC, the BC Agricultural Research & Development Corporation (ARDCorp) serves B.C. farmers and ranchers by delivering programs, funding, and expertise to enhance the competitiveness, innovation, and viability of the agriculture sector. These effective and affordable programs and services advance both the individual producer and entire agriculture sector while benefiting local communities. ARDCorp currently administers two environmental programs, the Environmental Farm Plan Program and the Climate Action Initiative.

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN PROGRAM

Farmers who have an Environmental Farm Plan are serious about learning how to reduce agriculture's impact on the environment. Many Environmental Farm Plan participants enjoy increased efficiency and profitability as a result of increased environmental sustainability.

Despite challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 EFP-BMP program year saw new heights of success. The planning advisors easily surpassed their targets for new and renewed EFPs by completing a combined total of 387 (target: 280). As well, the number of completed BMP projects more than doubled at 462 (target: 225) and saw in-excess of \$2.95 million reaching producers across the province. This includes the \$1.6 million in COVID-19 relief funding provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in late Fall of 2020.

For the first time in this round of CAP funding, we are happy to report the successful completion of two group EFPs. The Koksilah River group EFP which focused on agriculture's role in water sustainability, whereas the Bertrand Creek Group EFP narrowed in on water quality inputs. The Bertrand Creek Group EFP also included a partnership with the Healthy Watersheds Initiative and the University of the Fraser Valley.

EFP/BMP 2020 Success Story:

The Milton's were one of the very early adopters of the EFP Program. Oscar and his adult son Terry attended an EFP workshop presentation in Vernon BC on March of 2005 and completed their first EFP for their beef cow/calf and horse operation in the Malakwa area later that year.

Over the course of 15 years, the Milton's have completed multiple EFP projects and Valley View Ranch received the BC Cattlemen's Stewardship Award in recognition for their efforts up to this point.

In 2020, they installed a centre pivot irrigation system to replace part of their wheel line and traveling gun system. With their rapidly drained soils this will help them water their crops in a timelier manner, more efficiently with less total water use.



Old System



New System

Producer Testimony:

The Milton's appreciate how the program has enabled them to proceed with and correct environmental issues on their ranch.

"The program is structured in a way that anticipates the environmental needs and issues of farmers. Having a specific advisor to work with makes the program accessible and easy to navigate. Our advisor was always available to talk to about possible programs as well as helped us to during projects by answering questions and any concerns. The advisor and the program have an agricultural background which made our communications easier as they understood our needs and the direction we were wanting to go".

CLIMATE & AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE BC UPDATE

2020 Highlights

- 9 Regional Adaptation Program projects completed
- 30 projects initiated or underway
- 25+ events (workshops, field days, online sessions) delivered to 715+ attendees
- 23 new resources (fact sheets, videos, reports, webinars) published and shared
- Launched the Okanagan Invasive Species Online (OISO) Application

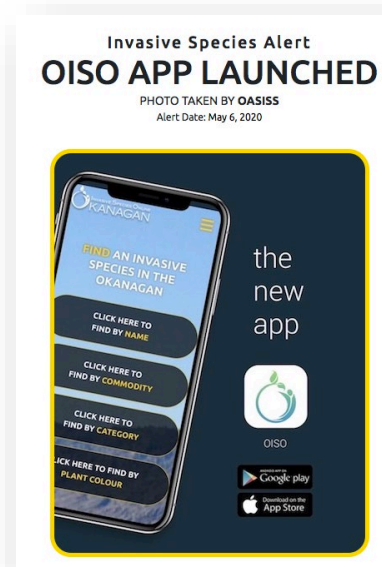
In 2020, the Climate & Agriculture Initiative BC (CAI) focused on delivering projects for agricultural adaptation, completing nearly 10 projects and launching 13 new projects. The projects were delivered across eight key agricultural regions in B.C. and addressed a range of producer priorities, including:

- assessing water supply risks and developing informational resources for managing farm water
- preparing for more extreme conditions, including extreme heat, wildfire, flood
- evaluating and/or addressing agricultural weather data gaps

CAI supported the continuation and initiation of multiple projects to assist the sector with managing changing pest and pollinator populations. These projects included:

- Assessing water supply risks and developing informational resources for managing farm water
- Expanding the scope and breadth of co-operative pest monitoring in the Peace region, including the addition of horticultural crops for the first time
- Completing a project to deliver information on key agricultural pests in the Cariboo, including two webinars and three fact sheets
- Supporting the creation of a series of new integrated pest management guides for small-scale vegetable and berry farms
- Initiating a project in Bulkley-Nechako and Fraser-Fort George to work with local producers to gather baseline data for agriculturally important pollinators
- Initiating a project to evaluate and prioritize pest and pollinator monitoring and management needs and gaps for Vancouver Island producers

A province-wide farm and ranch wildfire preparedness project delivered five workshops to producers in January and February. It then developed a series of three videos to support farmers and ranchers in



creating their own wildfire plans. The videos introduce producers to sector-specific wildfire planning resources, explain how to create an operations map for wildfire planning and response, and highlight ways to reduce wildfire risk on agricultural properties.



Major communications activities in 2020 revolved around the development of a new website for CAI, which was launched in early 2021. The website was designed to increase the accessibility of CAI resources and tools and provide comprehensive information about climate issues impacting agriculture.

Visit our new website at: www.ClimateAgricultureBC.ca



Our Members

BC Blueberry Council
BC Broiler Hatching Egg
Producers' Association
BC Cattlemen's Association
BC Cherry Association
BC Chicken Growers' Association
BC Cranberry Growers' Association
BC Dairy Association
BC Egg Producers' Association
BC Fruit Growers' Association
BC Grain Producers' Association
BC Grapegrowers' Association
BC Greenhouse Growers' Association
BC Honey Producers' Association
BC Landscape & Nursery Association
BC Pork Producers' Association

BC Potato & Vegetable Growers' Association
BC Poultry Association
BC Salmon Farmers Association
BC Strawberry Growers Association
BC Turkey Association
BC Wine Grape Council
Certified Organic Associations of
British Columbia
Fraser Valley Cole Crop Growers' Association
Fraser Valley Pea and Bush Bean
Growers' Association
Horse Council British Columbia
Mushroom Growers Society of BC
Peace Region Forage Seed Association
Raspberry Industry Development Council
United Flower Growers' Co-Op

Our Board

Stan Vander Waal - Board Chair
Representing Floriculture

**Rhonda Driediger - Vice-President /
WALI President**
Representing Coastal Horticulture

Ray VanMarrewyk - Board Treasurer
Representing Greenhouse Vegetables

***Jared DeJong/Sarah Sache -
Director at Large**
Representing Dairy

Lynda Atkinson - Director
Representing Equine

***Sukhpaul Bal/Troy Osborne - Director**
Representing Interior Horticulture

**Duncan Barnett - Director /
ARDCorp Vice-President**
Representing Cattle, Pork and Other Livestock

Wayne DeJong - Director
Representing Poultry

***Barry Follensbee/Ed Hadland - Director**
Representing Grain, Oilseeds and Forage

Niklaus Forstbauer - Director
Representing Organics

Marilyn Hutchinson - Director
Representing Aquaculture

Peter Levelton - Director
Representing Ornamental Horticulture

**Allen James - BCAC Ex-Officio/
ARDCorp President**

Leo Quik - BCAC Ex-Officio
Representing BC Young Farmers

**Director transitioning during part of 2020*



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