



2021

Annual
Report

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**BCAC is the lead industry
advocate for key
sector-wide priorities in B.C.**

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President's Message



Stan Vander Waal

Last year was a year unlike any other, and none of us have come away unaffected by the challenges of 2021. British Columbia farmers and ranchers endured record-breaking heat, flooding, and freezing temperatures, along with drought, wildfires, supply chain disruptions, all while the impact of COVID-19 continued to be felt across our businesses. Through it all, B.C.'s farmers and ranchers continued to persevere with the support of British Columbians across the province.

Before we knew what was to unfold, the Board and staff set a new direction for BC Agriculture Council (BCAC), beginning with the development of a new strategic plan. We sharpened our focus on advocacy and started the transition away from

program delivery. Strategic planning continued through to the end of the year with attention on four core activity areas: policy development, government relations, member relations, and public relations. We are proud of the results, which will guide BCAC for the next several years.

With BCAC's new path came a change in leadership as Reg Ens stepped down from the Executive Director role in August. We are truly grateful to Reg for his leadership over the past decade.

In June, the Board selected Danielle Synotte, our Director of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement since 2017, as the Council's next Executive Director. With her background in business administration and economic development, and her passion for advocating for the farmer, we know that BCAC is in good hands and look forward to seeing what Danielle accomplishes for our members over the coming years.

OUR VISION

BC Agriculture Council is the lead industry advocate for key sector-wide priorities in British Columbia.



In November, farmers and ranchers in Merritt, Princeton, Abbotsford, and numerous other communities experienced some of the most severe weather and flooding in our province's recent history. The impacts of the flooding and landslides were devastating. In response, BCAC began accepting donations for those impacted, experiencing an overwhelming response across the country. The Council's Fund for Farmers continued to receive donations well into 2022. The funds will be distributed in the spring to address the gaps from financial assistance elsewhere.

I would like to thank our members, their boards, sponsors, partners, government representatives, and all farmers and ranchers for your dedication to advancing agriculture in British Columbia. We look forward to continued collaboration as we grow a strong, sustainable, and competitive agriculture sector.

**Stan Vander Waal, President
BC Agriculture Council**

OUR MISSION

To grow a strong, sustainable, and competitive agriculture sector through building industry consensus and advancing public policy.



Executive Director Report

Year in Review



As BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2022, our team is excited to look back at all that has been accomplished and what lies ahead for the Council. The second quarter century of BCAC's leadership in agriculture looks ripe with both challenges and opportunities as we face what we hope are the waning days of a global pandemic yet look forward to developments in agri-tech and environmental practices that seemed distant imaginations when BCAC was incorporated in 1997.

Danielle Synotte

Rolling over from 2020, BCAC continued its work on the Cultivating Prosperity Initiative. With support from Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, we were able to obtain the resources needed to fully explore the needs of our members and consider whether we would make organizational changes to our direction, structure, and activities.

Through several consultation initiatives, BCAC was able to clearly define the priorities of its membership and began to strategically restructure to better support those needs. That included identifying sector policy priorities and determining the greatest industry needs from the next Agriculture Policy Framework agreement and on-farm programs for B.C. The Initiative led to BCAC having the confidence to move resources from delivering on-farm programming to enhancing its policy development capacity in order to better meet the needs of its members and the entire agriculture industry in B.C.

BCAC also went through a change in its leadership. Mid-year, Reg Ens announced his resignation from the Executive Director position. But he did not go far – Reg moved into a new position as the General Manager of the Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (WALI). While the WALI team is looking to improve the current service challenges experienced with temporary foreign workers and expanding the services provided by WALI, they will also support BCAC staff on all labour policy development work.

On a personal note, I have truly valued my time working under Reg's leadership. As I stepped into his role, I knew that I was building on the momentum from his many contributions to our province's agriculture sector over the past ten years. It has been, and will be, a pleasure working with him.



As we navigated into the fall, we embarked on setting a strategic direction that reflected the changes made to the organization, one that was intended to be highly purposeful and functional for BCAC. The product of this effort was for both process and results. Given the diversity and complexity of agriculture in B.C., focusing our efforts into the areas of highest value for our members and the entire agriculture sector is more important than ever.

With the input from the BCAC Board, staff and our membership, the organization has a new strategic vision aimed to capture the core of who BCAC is and why it exists – a re-articulation of why BCAC was formed, how we've evolved, as well as carve out the main areas of strategic priority for the next three years. We are excited to share the outcomes from our strategic planning with you in the following pages of this document. Work is still underway in this area. I'd like to thank Ken Nickel for his leadership and supporting BCAC in laying the foundation for future capacity building. The organization is eager to welcome a Director of Policy in early 2022.

Then we experienced some of the most extreme weather events B.C. has seen in a long time. Our homes and farm buildings weren't built to withstand the temperatures or water levels we saw. As an organization, we did our best to stay out of the way when our associations needed to focus on supporting farmers, however, we worked behind the scenes to engage with government staff, media, support crews, and numerous people who wanted to support farmers. More on our activities during this time will be shared in our presentation during the Annual General Meeting.

Both the federal and provincial government's priorities are clear: their mandate letters and additional investments into environmental impact reduction efforts and climate change mitigation/adaptation programs have already begun, and at the forefront, Indigenous reconciliation. I believe it may be of interest for us as a sector to begin including Indigenous awareness training into our work so that we can properly consider the linkages between Indigenous reconciliation and agriculture. Government's focus on Indigenous reconciliation is already, and will be moving forward, part of all process and policy conversations that we consider critical to agriculture – water, land, habitat, and resources (to name a few). Do we need to adapt our thinking to ensure agriculture is invited to the conversations?

We're so pleased to have you join us in person for this important meeting. I wish to thank you all again for your support and collective efforts during 2021.



OUR VISION *BC Agriculture Council is the lead industry advocate for*

GOAL

BCAC and its members **develop** a unified voice about issues and/or services that are important to the entire industry.

CORE ACTIVITY AREAS

MEMBER RELATIONS

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

BCAC is **recognized** as the credible and trustworthy voice of the agriculture sector in British Columbia.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

OUR MISSION *To grow a strong, sustainable and competitive agricul*

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Our key sector-wide priorities in British Columbia.

GOAL

Stakeholder objectives are **advanced** by the availability of current and prioritized portfolios on key issues that impact BC agriculture.

PRIORITY ISSUES

Water Security
Labour Supply
Land Use
Activism
On-Farm Programs
Consumer Awareness

GOAL

BCAC **contributes** in government policy and processes relating to cross-sector industry priorities.

KEY MISSION OUTCOMES

INCLUSION

BCAC is prepared and invited to engage.

IMPACT

BCAC's interests influence government decisions.

INDISPENSABLE

BCAC's value is clear to stakeholders.

Advance the agriculture sector through building industry consensus and advancing public policy.

Community Engagement

Growing community understanding of agriculture is a priority for BCAC. Since 2018, we've conducted consumer research to better understand the perceptions British Columbians have about the food system. The latest survey results are based on a study conducted in May 2021.

Highlights from the research:

- 96% of those surveyed agree that B.C. farmers produce quality products.
- 90% agree that B.C. farmers are reliable and trustworthy.
- Local origin is important to a vast majority of shoppers and can influence the purchasing decision for many.

We Heart Local BC and BC Agriculture in the Classroom co-hosted six virtual Cook-Alongs, featuring BC Blueberry Council, BC Chicken Marketing Board, BC Cranberry Marketing Commission, BC Dairy, BC Egg, BC Greenhouse Growers, Organic BC, and Mainland Milk Producers.

BCAC hosted CHAT Communications Workshops with BC Cattlemen's Association, Young Cattlemen's Council, and the 4-H BC Leadership Symposium to improve confidence in consumer engagement.

The last four years have taught us about the opportunities and challenges that come with direct consumer communications. The pandemic had a great impact on activities during 2021, but staff found alternate ways to engage. However, the pandemic – and organizational strategic planning – offered an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of past activities. While there is a lot to be proud of, there is still much work to do.

If farmers' influence drops, it is more difficult for our members to achieve their political goals. Public support for farmers' priorities is required to influence regulations. Further, without public support, farmers will continue being challenged on current farming practices. A lot of public trust work is already being done at the commodity level. However, a collective, sector-wide "voice of agriculture" is equally important to share with consumers and government to ensure the long-term success of B.C. farmers and ranchers.

We look forward to working on a renewed vision for this work with our membership in 2022.



592,255

Followers were reached on We Heart Local BC's social media - 11.5% growth over 2020!

6

Virtual Cook-Alongs with BC Agriculture in the Classroom generated nearly 100 news stories.



90%

Of those surveyed agree that B.C. farmers are reliable and trustworthy.



Farmer ID Card

UFV Project Highlight

In the fall, BC Agriculture Council partnered with the Advanced Selling class at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) on a Farmer ID (FID) Card sales campaign. BCAC provided the class with a list of lapsed FID cardholders and after two months of classroom training, students launched into the campaign on November 1st. Working in teams, they contacted farmers on the renewals list, from their personal networks and from their own prospecting efforts. By the end of November, students had contacted 600 farms by phone and email, resulting in \$5,500 in card renewals and new sales for BCAC. The project resulted in UFV wishing to partner with our program again for their next campaign.

Online Applications

Over 400 cardholders applied or renewed their FID cards online in 2021.

Top Members

Horse Council of BC
BC Cattlemen's Association
BC Blueberry Council

New Accounts

BCAC had 755 new and renewed cardholders in 2021 for a total sales of \$217,030.

2021 Highlights







BC Young Farmers

BC Young Farmers (BCYF) is a working committee within BC Agriculture Council that provides a forum where young leaders can discuss issues related to agriculture, participate in policy-building processes, and build connections between BCAC and the next generation of farmers in B.C.

In social and interactive settings, BCYF committee members learn and practice leadership skills and facilitate young farmer education, issue awareness, and community. BCYF committee members are young farmers between the ages of 19 and 40 who engage with others from across the province and industry.



January - March

- Participated in virtual Pacific Agriculture Show
- Strategic Planning
- Contributed to BCAC CAP review
- Sent young farmers to CFA's AGM, COABC conference, Canadian Young Farmers Forum, and CHC AGM
- Webinar: *Parasite Control and Prevention in Production Animals*
- Hosted CAP-funded webinar: *Financing a New or Growing Farm*
- Developed and launched a new logo for BCYF



April - June

- Sent young farmer to National Farm Leadership Program
- Conducted committee self-review
- Commissioned a farm tour video in the Cariboo
- Sent young farmers to COGA and Small Business BC webinars
- Hosted CAP-funded webinar: *Growing Your Farm Team* in collaboration with WALI
- Revised website and moved to BCAC platform



July - September

- Participated in National Conversation on Youth in Agriculture
- Participated in BCAC General Managers' Strategic Planning

15

Young farmers attended industry events with help from BCYF

250

New subscribers to BCYF Newsletter



October - December

- Commissioned three farm tour videos
- Received a significant donation from Envision Financial
- Participated in Ag Day
- Hosted two events before November floods

500

New social media followers

Committee Members (2022)

Chair: Rudi Meier - *Dairy*

Vice-Chair: Rebecca Senicar - *Dairy*

Treasurer: Russell Reitsema - *Broiler*

Director: Jacintha Kulchar - *Beef*



Western Agriculture Labour Initiative

As the pandemic continued into 2021, the WALI team focused much of its efforts on supporting employers through rapidly changing travel and workplace safety restrictions and assisting employers in bringing temporary foreign workers (TFWs) safely to B.C.

The provincially funded and operated quarantine facilities remained an incredible benefit for B.C. employers in 2021. WALI would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health, Vancouver Coastal Health, Success, Mi Tierra Holidays, and the Sheraton and Marriott hotels in Richmond for their help over the past two years.

To address some of the challenges of bringing TFWs to Canada, WALI developed a new employer portal. The system, which will improve communication between Mi Tierra, WALI, and employers, launched at the end of the year.

WALI also participated on national labour working groups with both the Canadian Federation of Agriculture

(CFA) and Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC), ensuring that B.C. concerns were raised with Canadian and foreign government staff. CFA and CHC also initiated key meetings with Members of Parliament relating to policy changes for the programs.

In the fall, WALI worked with first responders, foreign government staff, local support agencies, and employers to assist workers displaced by floods. A big thank you to every volunteer who



assisted workers and to GiveClear Canada for providing financial support to workers who lost personal belongings. The floods reinforced the need for industry to work with outside organizations. WALI continues to build strategic connections with settlement agencies and groups who support new Canadians.

Looking forward, WALI will actively participate on a project led by the Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council (CAHRC), CFA, and Food and Beverage Canada to develop a "National Workforce Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Food & Beverage Manufacturing". While TFWs are likely to be a key part of Canadian farm operations, the sector needs to look at additional actions to address the labour crisis.

With the labour shortage showing no sign of improvement in 2021, the BCAC Board supported a new position in WALI. Reg Ens stepped down as BCAC Executive Director to take on the new role as General Manager of the company to lead strategy development for support services.

9500

Temporary foreign workers traveled to B.C. to work on B.C. farms with help from WALI.

1000

Subscribers to the WALI newsletter.



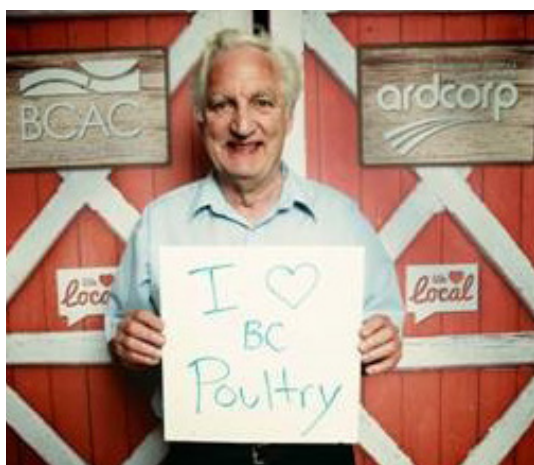


Agricultural Research & Development Corporation

In June 2021, BCAC's Board of Directors announced their decision to focus on advocacy and step away from delivering government programs through their subsidiary, the Agricultural Research and Development Corporation (ARDCorp). BCAC recommended that Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) take over the program delivery responsibilities for the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP), Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) as well as the Climate & Agriculture Initiative BC. The BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries agreed.

In December 2021, the transition was complete; IAF now delivers these programs on behalf of the Canadian and B.C. governments. Thank you to the staff and contractors who supported these projects, many of whom continue to work with producers through IAF. For more information, visit www.iafbc.ca.

Remembering Allen James



Allen James, dedicated Chair of ARDCorp for nearly a decade, passed away suddenly on June 9, 2021.

While poultry was his primary commodity, Allen was a passionate advocate for all of agriculture. He was a leader in EFP and CAI as well as a contributor to many environmental committees. He was active in the poultry sector, serving on the Sustainable Poultry Farming Group and the Biosecurity Committee. He was involved in writing the first edition of the BC

Biosecurity Manual and provided input in the latest edition. In addition, he was BC Poultry Association's representative on all environmental initiatives. He attended every meeting related to the environment, whether regulatory or production.

A former teacher and school administrator, Allen cared for the next generation and in recent years served as a mentor for BC Young Farmers. Allen will forever be remembered in our hearts.



Program Highlights



ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

\$1.25 Million

Allocated to 211
Beneficial Management
Practices projects.

400

Environmental Farm
Plans completed in 2021
across B.C. with support
from 26 advisors.

+4

New advisors joined the
Planning Advisors team
since June.

Only includes a portion of the program year.



Climate Action Initiative

BC AGRICULTURE & FOOD

In 2021, the Climate & Agriculture Initiative BC (CAI) completed 9 projects and launched 12 new projects with funding from the Government of BC's

Climate Change Adaptation Program. The projects were delivered in eight regions in B.C. and focused on climate adaptation for agricultural producers, including topics such as:

- Wildfire planning and preparedness
- Pasture and crop management for forage operations
- Integrated pest management for horticulture crops

CAI continued supporting projects that help producers manage and mitigate the impacts of hotter and drier summers. These projects included:

- Identifying suitable approaches for minimizing the impact of extreme heat to product quality and health on Fraser Valley dairy farms
- Displaying the effectiveness of reflective tarps in managing extreme heat to maintain blueberry quality
- Monitoring and enhancing greenhouse irrigation infrastructure during times of low water supply
- Improving water and irrigation efficiency in the Okanagan

Communications activities in 2021 included event promotion, sharing of project deliverables, and website maintenance.

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 Strawberry Growers Association
BC Turkey Association
BC Wine Grape Council
Fraser Valley Cole Crop Growers' Association
Fraser Valley Pea and Bush Bean Growers' Association
Horse Council British Columbia
Organic BC
Peace Region Forage Seed Association
Raspberry Industry Development Council
United Flower Growers

Our Board

Stan Vander Waal - President
Floriculture

Rhonda Driediger - Vice President/WALI President
Coastal Horticulture

Ray VanMarrewyk - Board Treasurer
Greenhouse Vegetables

Sarah Sache - Director at Large
Dairy

Duncan Barnett - Director/ARDCorp Acting President
Cattle & Other Livestock

Lynda Atkinson - Director
Equine

Wayne DeJong - Director
Poultry

Niklaus Forstbauer - Director
Organics

Ed Hadland - Director
Grain

Peter Levelton - Director
Nursery

Troy Osborne - Director
Interior Horticulture

Rudi Meier - Ex-Officio
BC Young Farmers