

# PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA DIRECTORS COMMITTEE MEETING

## A G E N D A

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for the meeting to be held on Thursday, April 16, 2015 in the  
Regional District Office Boardroom, 1981 Alaska Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC  
following the Regional Budgets Administration Committee Meeting.

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1. Call to Order: Director Goodings to Chair the meeting
2. Director's Notice of New Business:
3. Adoption of Agenda:
4. Adoption of Minutes:
  - M-1 Electoral Area Directors' Committee Minutes of March 19, 2015
5. Business Arising from the Minutes:
  - BA-1 Bruce Simard, General Manager of Development Services, Draft Terms of Reference for the Agriculture Advisory Committee.
  - BA-2 Bruce Simard, General Manager of Development Services, discussion regarding the Draft Agriculture Plan (hard copies distributed March 9, 2015).
6. Delegations:
7. Correspondence:
  - C-1 Copy of the letter to Ms. Sandra Carter, Valkyrie Law Group, requesting a legal opinion regarding negotiations for the Fair Share Memorandum of Understanding.
8. Reports:
  - R-1 Jodi MacLean, Assistant Manager of Development Services, regarding West Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan (Draft).
  - R-2 Erin Price, Bylaw Enforcement Officer, regarding Enforcement File Update.
9. New Business:
10. Communications:
11. Diary:
12. Adjournment:



**PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT  
ELECTORAL AREA DIRECTORS' COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**M-1**

DATE: March 19, 2015

PLACE: Regional District Office Boardroom, Dawson Creek, BC

PRESENT:

Directors: Karen Goodings, Director, Electoral Area 'B' and Meeting Chair  
Brad Sperling, Director, Electoral Area 'C'  
Leonard Hiebert, Director, Electoral Area 'D'  
Dan Rose, Director, Electoral Area 'E'

Staff: Shannon Anderson, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Jo-Anne Frank, Corporate Officer  
Bruce Simard, General Manager of Development Services  
Kim Frech, Chief Financial Officer  
Fran Haughian, Communications Manager / Commission Liaison  
Barb Coburn, Recording Secretary

Call to Order Chair Goodings called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

March 19, 2015 Agenda

MOVED by Director Hiebert, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
that the Electoral Area Directors' Committee agenda for the March 19, 2015 meeting, including  
items of New Business, be adopted:  
Call to Order: Director Goodings to Chair the meeting  
Director's Notice of New Business:  
Adoption of Agenda:  
Adoption of Minutes:  
M-1 Electoral Area Directors' Committee Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2015  
M-2 Special Electoral Area Directors' Committee Minutes of March 12, 2015.  
Business Arising from the Minutes:  
Delegations:  
Correspondence:  
C-1 February 4, 2015 letter from Mike McConnell, President, Peace River Regional Cattlemen's  
Association regarding the Agriculture Advisory Committee.  
Reports:  
R-1 Bruce Simard, General Manager of Development Services regarding the Development Application  
Review Process.  
R-2 March 11, 2015, Chris Cvik, Chief Administrative Officer, regarding Project Update #3: Sub-  
Regional Water Function and Sub-Regional Septage Handling Function.  
R-3 March 6, 2015, Chris Cvik, Chief Administrative Officer, regarding Quarterly Listing - Open Board  
Items - Follow-up Report.  
New Business:  
NB-1 AAC Terms of Reference (Handout)  
NB-2 Fair Share  
NB-3 Notification Radius  
NB-4 Communications  
NB-5 Dogs  
NB-6 Rural Advisory Council Announced (Handout)  
Diary:  
Adjournment:

CARRIED.

**April 16, 2015**

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

M-1  
EADC meeting minutes of  
February 19, 2015

MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Director Hiebert,  
that the Electoral Area Directors' Committee Meeting minutes of February 19, 2015 be adopted.  
CARRIED.

M-2  
Special EADC meeting  
minutes of March 12, 2015

MOVED by Director Sperling, SECONDED by Director Hiebert,  
that the Special Electoral Area Directors' Committee Meeting minutes of March 12, 2015 be  
adopted.  
CARRIED.

CORRESPONDENCE:

C-1  
re: Agriculture Advisory  
Committee Vacancies

MOVED by Director Hiebert, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
That Item C-1 be tabled, to be discussed in conjunction with NB-1.  
CARRIED.

REPORTS

R-1  
re: Development  
Application Review Process

MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Director Sperling,  
That the Electoral Area Directors' Committee recommend that the Regional Board that a two-  
week period be added to the development application review process to allow time for the  
appropriate Electoral Area Director to review applications prior to it going to the Regional Board  
for consideration.  
CARRIED.

MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Director Hiebert,  
That the Electoral Area Directors' Committee recommend to the Regional Board that the role of  
the Peace River Regional District regarding Agricultural Land Commission applications be  
reviewed.  
CARRIED.

Recess  
Reconvene

The meeting recessed for lunch at 11:55 a.m.  
The meeting reconvened 12:20 p.m.

R-2  
re: Water Function and  
Sub-Regional Septage  
Handling Function

The Directors discussed the various existing water facilities within the Regional District. It was  
noted that there is a need for water functions in order to meet future demands by rural residents  
for potable water and that future water facilities will also need to meet Provincial rules and  
regulations for supplying water to the public. It was suggested that referendums be held in  
Electoral Areas 'B', 'C' and 'D' and that Director Rose meet with the residents in Electoral Area  
'E' to determine the need and interest for a water function in that area. It was also felt that  
November would be a suitable time to hold the referendums.

R-3 (a)  
re: Open Board Follow-up  
Item R-14, July 11, 2013

MOVED by Director Hiebert, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
That the Electoral Area Directors' Committee recommend to staff that a letter be forwarded to  
the president of the Bear Mountain Pasture Association to inform him of the new ATV legislation.  
CARRIED.

R-3 (b)  
re: Open Board Follow-up  
Item R-1, March 8, 2012

MOVED by Director Hiebert, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
That the Electoral Area Directors' Committee recommend that staff archive R-1 from the  
March 8, 2102 Regional Board Meeting.  
CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

NB-1 (and C-1)  
re: AAC Terms of  
Reference

Following a lengthy discussion regarding the vacancies for the Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) and its Terms of Reference, the Directors requested that the discussion be referred to the next Electoral Area Directors' Committee meeting.

NB-3  
re: Notification Radius

MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Director Sperling,  
That the Electoral Area Directors' Committee recommend that the Regional Board give consideration of a bylaw that:  
(1) amends the public notification area for Development Variance Permit notices to 100 meters around the subject property; and  
(2) amends the public notification area overlap into a municipality be a maximum of 100 meters for all land use applications.

CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Director Hiebert,  
That the meeting adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

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Karen Goodings, Chair

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Barb Coburn, Recording Secretary

**BA-1**

Peace River  
Regional  
District

**Draft**

# Regional Agricultural Plan



June 2014

April 16, 2015

# REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL PLAN IN CONTEXT

The Peace River Regional District is located in North-East British Columbia on the Prairie side of the Rocky Mountains. The boundaries contain approximately twelve million hectares (46,000 square miles) of land, 11% within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Discussions with industry leaders and stakeholders identified a wide range of issues affecting the agricultural sector in the PRRD. Producers may experience higher production costs and this affects their ability to compete with other jurisdictions. The robust oil and gas sector has also affected agriculture making it more difficult for producers to obtain labour and other inputs at competitive costs relative to prices for agricultural products.

Production units are substantially larger in the PRRD than in other parts of British Columbia (more than 4 times larger) and the size is continuing to increase, consistent with Canadian and provincial trends. In 2011, the average farm size in the PRRD was 537.5 ha (1,328 ac). In comparison, the average provincial farm size is 132 ha (326 ac).

Seven main field crops dominate crop production (wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa, other tame hay and fodder crops, canola and forage seed) accounting for 98% of crop production. Alfalfa and tame hay/fodder are grown extensively in the PRRD, dominating the major crops.

Almost 23% of all beef cattle in BC were in the PRRD in 2006 but numbers have declined. From 1991 to 2006, the number of cattle increased from almost 109 thousand to almost 146 thousand head. In 2011, there were approximately 100,000 head of cattle, a decline of about 9% from 1991. The beef cattle business has been difficult for producers and many have reduced their cattle holdings. Other important livestock in the Regional District are poultry, sheep and lambs, horses, and bison.

The BC Ministry of Agriculture has projected strong future demand for BC's agricultural products.<sup>1</sup> Expecting increasing demand from emerging economies in China, India and the Pacific Rim, the Ministry predicted a \$3.5 billion increase over the next five years. The PRRD may be appropriately positioned to gain from some of this anticipated expansion.

The Regional Agricultural Plan is being prepared to provide guidance to the Regional District for encouraging and supporting agricultural activity both within and outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

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<sup>1</sup> BC Ministry of Agriculture, *BC Agri-Foods: A Strategy for Growth*, March, 2012.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Regional District's Agricultural Advisory Committee is providing direction for the Regional Agricultural Plan and their help and support is appreciated. Members involved are listed below:

Lori Ackerman	Kerry Clark	Burnem Grant	Judy Madden
Gregory Bartle	Jim Collins	Heather Hansen	Greg Neave
Garnet Berge	Jill Copes	Leonard Hiebert	Bob Purdon
Arlene Boon	Don Dunbar	Wayne Hiebert	Julie Robinson
Bill Bouffieux	Maurice Fines	Rod Kronlachner	Ruth Veiner
Frank Breault	Karen Goodings	Fred Lehman	

Thanks are also extended to the PRRD Regional Board for providing the financial support for the Plan. Thanks are also owed to the Investment Agriculture Foundation and the BC Ministry of Agriculture for their financial contributions.

Without the contributions of the Regional District's agricultural community, particularly during the consultation process, this Draft Regional Agricultural Plan could not have reached this stage and the help provided has been appreciated.

Don Cameron Associates  
June, 2014



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is pleased to participate in this project. AAFC is committed to working with our industry partners and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC to increase public awareness of the importance of the agriculture and the agri-food industry to Canada. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the organization and not necessarily of AAFC.

*Funding provided by:*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Regional Agricultural Plan is to guide the Peace River Regional District in its process of encouraging and supporting agricultural activity both within and outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve. Upon adoption by Regional Board, the Regional Agricultural Plan is expected to be a reference document for the Board and staff. It will act as a guide for the work plans of staff, the Agricultural Advisory Committee and other partners relative to the agricultural industry. The Plan contains material relevant to future Official Community Plans in all areas related to agriculture and agricultural development.

The vision for the future of agriculture in the PRRD was developed, based on extensive consultation with stakeholders and the community. The vision developed was:

*The Peace River Regional District supports agricultural development and protection of agricultural land for a sustainable and profitable agricultural industry*

It is expected that the vision will be realized within the context of four broad strategy areas that contain a series of policies and actions that, together, are the directions for the Regional Agricultural Plan.

Within the four strategy areas are 20 initiatives resulting in 32 policy statements and 25 suggestions for action. The Regional Agricultural Plan was designed to be fully implemented over a period of approximately 20 years with actions identified for the short term (the first 5 years), medium term (6 to 10 years), and long term (11 to 20 years).

Many of the actions require few resources and can be implemented quickly. Early adoption of selected policies and actions can help build a positive attitude for increased agricultural development that will create momentum for some actions that may require more resources and time.

The following table 1 in this Executive Summary identifies the four strategy areas and the policies and actions, by strategy area, and outlines the anticipated implementation steps for each policy and action.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 contained in the section “Implementation and Moving Forward” identify each action of the Regional Agricultural Plan for short, medium and long term implementation, and provides, where possible, cost estimates for implementation.

Table 1: Policies and Actions for the Regional Agricultural Plan

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	2.1.1 Support Agriculture by Regional Board and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support strengthening agricultural development in the Regional District consistent with the goals and principles of PRRD planning documents (AAC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to Investigate options</li> <li>Determine priority items</li> <li>Appoint Regional Board member to “spearhead” efforts to enhance the agricultural industry where possible</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage regional, provincial, and federal governments to establish agricultural policies and protocols that are sensitive to the needs of agricultural producers and processors (AAC, North and South Peace EDCs, commodity groups)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders to develop appropriate policy initiatives</li> <li>Encourage appropriate agencies to support the needs of agricultural producers and processors</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support positive staff contact with individuals and all industry groups, including agriculture, wishing to expand or establish their businesses (AAC, EDCs)</li> </ul>			Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support increasing staff knowledge about agriculture by supporting staff training and attendance at relevant agricultural workshops and seminars (AAC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage additional staff training related to agriculture and agricultural processing where possible</li> </ul>	Short term
	2.1.2 Ensure Effective Agricultural Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support having an active and effective Agricultural Advisory Committee</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer agricultural issues to the AAC</li> <li>Provide sufficient staff support</li> <li>Regularly (every 2 years) review AAC membership to ensure effective members and appropriate representation</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate regular, ongoing monitoring by the Agricultural Advisory Committee of selected indicators affecting agriculture in the PRRD (AAC, staff)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine appropriate agricultural indicators</li> <li>Report regularly on selected indicators</li> </ul>	Medium term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request an annual work plan from the Agricultural Advisory Committee and ensure an appropriate budget for completion of the work plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that an annual work plan is identified</li> <li>Recognize an appropriate annual budget</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide updates to the Agricultural Profile, consistent with the release of Agricultural Statistics relevant to the PRRD, (AAC, BCMA, IAF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the Profile be updated every 5 years, as new Census of Agriculture data becomes available</li> </ul>	Medium term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	2.1.3 Provide Regular Consultation with Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support regular contact with agricultural producers as a component of effective communications (AAC, local agricultural communities)</li> </ul>			Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the AAC meet regularly with producers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold at least one AAC meeting each year in one of the three sub-regions of the PRRD ensuring at least one meeting is held in the three sub regions over a three year period</li> <li>Invite local producers and/or producer organizations to participate in the meeting by joining the AAC members for a portion of the meeting</li> <li>Use existing agricultural organizations and groups to provide contacts to invite</li> <li>Provide for some discussion of local agricultural issues and concerns</li> <li>Ensure follow up reporting on the outcome of the discussions</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support the development of local producer organizations or other locally-based producer associations or groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information to local producers on where other active producer organizations are operating</li> <li>Provide consultation and organizational help (where possible) to producers who would like to form a local association or group to communicate more easily with the PRRD</li> </ul>	Long term
	2.1.4 Foster Communication Among Resource Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support effective and meaningful communication and networking among all industry leaders and industry workers in the PRRD (AAC, ALC, BCM)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current levels of communication among main industry leaders and workers in the PRRD</li> <li>Contact industry leaders to determine merits of addressing local issues</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support industry efforts to address all issues and concerns that may affect those operating in other industries</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and list the issues affecting agriculture on 3-5 year basis</li> <li>Identify and list the issues and concerns of other main industry groups</li> <li>Continue to identify options and ideas for addressing these issues</li> </ul>	Short term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	2.1.4 Foster Communication Among Resource Industries (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Working Group to be composed of industry leaders and workers (agriculture, oil and gas, representative industry workers) who will meet with PRRD Senior personnel to review industry issues and concerns (AAC, PRRD Senior personnel, Industry leaders, industry workers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop terms of reference for a Working Group</li> <li>Meet with landowners as required</li> <li>Seek support from selected industry leaders and workers</li> <li>Hold initial meetings to review issues and concerns</li> <li>Continue to identify options and ideas for addressing issues such as training materials, courses etc.</li> <li>Provide a forum to advise industry leaders and workers about extent of activity of all industries in in the PRRD</li> <li>Ensure follow up reporting and action occurs</li> <li>Consider a schedule for ongoing meetings coordinated by the PRRD and possibly held every three months with reporting on progress between meetings</li> </ul>	Medium term
	2.1.5 Encourage Regulations Reflect PRRD Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the concept that rules and regulations developed by the PRRD should reflect the interests and needs of most PRRD industries and citizens (AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing bylaws and planning documents to ensure relevance</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an appropriate "agricultural lens" to review existing and future rules and regulations developed by the PRRD and applicable to the PRRD when developed by other bodies such as the provincial government (AAC, BCMA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review requirements and concerns of the agricultural community</li> <li>Prepare appropriate terms of reference for a project to further develop the "agricultural lens" for reviewing rules and regulations of the PRRD</li> <li>Ensure consultation with appropriate members of the agricultural community</li> <li>Seek appropriate funding to further refine and test the "agricultural lens"</li> </ul>	Short term
	2.1.6 Encourage Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support partnerships with other organizations and agencies and working together to enhance agricultural production (AAC, agricultural community, South and North Economic Development Commissions) commodity groups, other agencies)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a list of potential partners</li> <li>Facilitate meetings and contact with potential partners</li> <li>Encourage partnerships between organizations with common goals</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	2.1.7 Promote Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the agricultural industry as an important economic contributor to the Regional District economy (AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor agricultural production in the PRRD</li> <li>Regularly promote initiatives which support the economic contribution made by agriculture</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage citizens to learn about the role and importance of agriculture (AAC, agricultural community)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote agricultural fairs and other agricultural events in the PRRD</li> <li>Feature selected agriculture events on PRRD website</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the BC Agriculture in the Classroom program as a way to further knowledge about agriculture</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review all schools in the Regional District to determine presence of the AITC program</li> <li>Encourage all schools to participate in the AITC program</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support existing and developing agricultural tours in the three sub regions organized by local agricultural communities and other partners as appropriate (AAC, Local communities)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify local communities of existing tour options</li> <li>Encourage Regional Board participation in the tours</li> <li>Encourage media coverage of the tour</li> <li>Encourage producers and others to participate in tours in other sub-regions</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a brochure, suitable for distribution to PRRD citizens and new arrivals to the Regional District, outlining the role and importance of agriculture, including information about normal farm practices resulting from a productive industry (AAC, BCMA, IAF, agricultural community)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review requirements</li> <li>Work with BCMA for information regarding normal farm practices</li> <li>See sample of a brochure, "Embracing a Farm Community" available in Chilliwack</li> <li>Prepare brochure using PRRD examples and graphics</li> <li>Distribute brochure through appropriate channels</li> <li>Make brochure available in electronic format for posting to the PRRD website</li> </ul>	Medium term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate idea of producers placing appropriate signs in well-travelled areas of the PRRD indicating crops grown or other agricultural activities present (AAC, agricultural community)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review with agricultural community</li> <li>Establish Committee as required</li> <li>Consider a pilot project in one of the sub-regions such as North Peace</li> <li>Design a common format for the signs</li> </ul>	Medium term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	2.1.7 Promote Agriculture (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review areas of the PRRD where large agricultural equipment is moved regularly and provide signs to make motorists aware of slower moving agricultural equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review travel patterns</li> <li>Seek input from the agricultural community</li> <li>Erect signs as appropriate</li> <li>Provide seasonal advertising reminders to watch for agricultural equipment on roads</li> <li>Include information about moving large equipment in "emergency preparedness" brochures</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a study on the economic impact of agriculture based on the model used for the recently completed study in the City of Abbotsford (BCMA, IAF, AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint appropriate Committee</li> <li>Develop Terms of Reference for an agricultural economic impact study</li> </ul>	Long term
	2.1.8 Plan for Crises and Disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support working with all relevant government agencies and agricultural groups and associations to address crises and disasters affecting the agricultural community (BCMA, PEP, agricultural community, commodity associations)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify relevant partners and organizations</li> <li>Ensure input to emergency planning</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support emergency planning at the PRRD level to identify relevant and potential agricultural emergencies such as flooding, other storm related issues, livestock issues and others (AAC, BCMA, PEP, agricultural community)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in emergency planning for agriculture</li> <li>Identify relevant and potential agricultural issues that may lead to emergency situations</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
	2.1.9 Establish Good Neighbour Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage positive relationships among all citizens (AAC, citizens)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the "good neighbour" policy developed below</li> <li>Review the merits of programs, in cooperation with the RCMP, and related to being good neighbours such as Citizens on Patrol Program and Rural Crime Watch Program</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and promote a "good neighbour" policy to encourage goodwill, respect for all opinions, and the spirit of being good neighbours among all citizens when addressing issues of conflict (AAC, citizens)</li> </ul> <p>Under this policy, producers will be encouraged to:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a good neighbour policy with responsibility for actions by both the agricultural producer other citizens</li> <li>Incorporate "good neighbour" policy into the agricultural brochure (see 2.1.5) and add to PRRD website</li> <li>Determine appropriate other venues for information about</li> </ul>	Medium term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	2.1.9 Establish Good Neighbour Policy (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ get to know their neighbours and share information about their production practices where possible</li> <li>✓ support management practices that enhance quality of life, attention to welfare of livestock and sensitivity to the environment</li> <li>✓ reduce dust, noise, and odour where reasonable</li> <li>✓ consider visual screening or hedging where practical and affordable</li> <li>✓ allow normal vehicle traffic to pass, where possible, when travelling busy roads with large equipment and tractors</li> </ul> <p>Neighbours and all citizens will be encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ understand “normal farm practices” and other best management practices on agricultural operations</li> <li>✓ support producers’ need to operate their businesses in an economically sustainable manner</li> <li>✓ appreciate the contributions of area agriculture to local food supplies and food security</li> <li>✓ eliminate unauthorized trespass on area agricultural operations and relevant range areas</li> <li>✓ report all incidences of dumping of waste and garbage on area agricultural operations and relevant range areas</li> <li>✓ report observed incidences of vandalism and theft from agricultural businesses, processing sites and relevant range areas</li> <li>✓ yield to agricultural equipment and other large vehicles accessing area agricultural operations</li> </ul>	the policy and distribution of the brochure	



Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
ENCOURAGING NECESSARY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	2.2.1 Provide a Water Strategy for Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate and encourage water stewardship, water conservation efforts and secure water supply for food production and human animal husbandry in the PRRD</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop suggestions and ideas for further water stewardship and conservation including programs for additional water storage for agricultural purposes</li> <li>Promote and provide information about water stewardship and water conservation to PRRD citizens in cooperation with local governments and the Regional Board</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Regional District resource base to increase knowledge of water issues and water management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect and post to the PRRD website resources and information available from other jurisdictions such as the 2009 publication, The Sustainable Management of Groundwater in Canada</li> <li>Collect and post PRRD resources such as the report from the Kiskatinaw River Watershed Research Project and Proceedings of the former Peace River Watershed Council</li> <li>Identify the importance of unimpeded drainage and riparian areas to downstream water supply</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and encourage area water committees on an "as needed" basis to review and identify water issues including reviewing and addressing water issues for agriculture in the shorter term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek interested participants by reviewing and contacting those who were part of the Fraser Basin Council workshop in May, 2013</li> <li>Provide start-up funding to encourage development of water committees and to support attendance at meetings</li> <li>Regularly receive reports from the committees</li> <li>Evaluate the merits of various water committees after three years of operation</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate a pilot project with agricultural producers willing to participate to identify baseline data on water use by agriculture (AAC, Sub-region Water Committees, cooperating producers, IAF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee of AAC to develop terms of reference for the pilot project</li> <li>Seek cooperating producers</li> <li>Obtain funding from available sources such as the Investment Agriculture Foundation</li> </ul>	Short term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
ENCOURAGING NECESSARY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	2.2.1 Provide a Water Strategy for Agriculture (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Water Use Strategy for Agriculture, including groundwater, in cooperation with other industries and citizens of the PRRD (AAC, BCMA, GeoScience BC and others)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be done in the longer term, identify selected processes and strategies needed to develop the overall strategy</li> <li>Work closely with all other groups interested and involved in water issues</li> <li>Seek input from other industry groups, agencies and organizations</li> </ul>	Long term
	2.2.2 Address Road and Traffic Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the needs of all stakeholders, including the agricultural sector, and advocate, where possible for improvements to road infrastructure (AAC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include AAC representation on any Road and Transportation committees that may be established</li> <li>Request AAC comment in the planning of new roads or future road improvements on existing roads in the rural area or the overall road network</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review PRRD road infrastructure to identify shortcomings in the context of growing road demand (AAC, Agricultural community)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop terms of reference for a review of road infrastructure</li> <li>Request AAC involvement</li> <li>Further identify and list traffic issues faced by the agricultural community and other industry sectors and citizens</li> <li>Report to Regional Board</li> </ul>	Long term
	2.2.3 Encourage Local Processing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support food processing on area agricultural businesses when consistent with the Agricultural Land Commission Act and Regulations (AAC, ALC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review bylaws and regulations to ensure consistency with ALC regulations</li> <li>Amend regulations if required</li> <li>Negotiate with the ALC to encourage regulations that strengthen agriculture in the PRRD</li> <li>Promote processing options to area producers</li> <li>Work with regulating agencies to facilitate establishment of more local processing</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support efforts to attract food processors to the PRRD and work with interested processors to provide infrastructure needs where possible (PRRD Staff, EDCs)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize importance of food processing to overall agricultural expansion</li> <li>Work with cattle industry representatives to support efforts for local processing</li> <li>Document infrastructure needs of larger-scale food processing industries</li> <li>Review existing infrastructure against the needs of larger-scale food processing industries</li> </ul>	Short term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
ENCOURAGING NECESSARY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	2.2.3 Encourage Local Processing Facilities (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the development of the agricultural industry is considered by the Economic Development Commissions and other appropriate agencies and groups in the PRRD (AAC, NPEDC, SPEDC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon completion, arrange to present the Regional Agricultural Plan to the Economic Development Commissions</li> <li>Consider meetings and ongoing liaison between the AAC and the Economic Development Commissions and/or other groups or agencies where possible</li> </ul>	Short term
	2.2.4 Encourage Local Purchasing of Agricultural Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support direct marketing opportunities for area producers (AAC, BCAFM, BCMA)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and amend bylaws, zoning, business licenses and regulations, where required, to ensure they support direct marketing opportunities for local food, including processing and sales, agri-tourism, and farmers' markets</li> <li>Encourage local governments to support existing (and new farmers' markets when appropriate) by providing appropriate permits, signage, access to permanent visible locations, marketing support, access to water, public washrooms, electricity, and parking.</li> <li>Review and promote the best practices with the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM)</li> <li>Raise awareness of local products for sale through website and other communication methods</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of a local food council or agricultural direct marketing association (AAC, CFPL, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review development of similar organizations and associations in other parts of BC such as FARMED (North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association), Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association and Southern Vancouver Island Farm Direct Marketing Association</li> <li>Provide initial resources to encourage the agricultural community to discuss possibility of creating a food council or local direct marketing association</li> </ul>	Medium term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
ENCOURAGING NECESSARY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	2.2.4 Encourage Local Purchasing of Agricultural Products (Cont'd)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider collaborating with Community Futures Peace Liard, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions and/or other groups to run programming to support increased purchasing of local foods within the region.</li> </ul>	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of local food purchasing policies in large public institutions in the PRRD (AAC, PHABC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review examples of local food purchasing policies that are occurring in other jurisdictions. The Public Health Association of BC (PHABC) has documented some successful examples and potential barriers</li> <li>Further assess the merits of such a policy with the AAC and EDCs</li> <li>Encourage local associations and producer organizations or associations, such as the ones suggested above, to discuss opportunities and barriers with large public institutions located within the PRRD</li> <li>Explore further resources that may aid local governments and other public institutions with food purchasing decisions</li> <li>Ensure compliance of institutional purchasing policies with various trade agreements including the North American Free Trade</li> </ul>	Long term
SUPPORTING A SECURE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE	2.3.1 Protect Agricultural Land for Agricultural Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the protection of agricultural land, both within and outside of the ALR, for agricultural purposes (AAC, BCMA, ALC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure policies in official documents and relevant Official Community Plans continue to support protection of agricultural land for agricultural purposes</li> <li>Support applications by agricultural producers to include non-ALR land into the ALR</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek advice from the Agricultural Advisory Committee for applications received by the PRRD for removal, boundary adjustment, sub-division or non-agricultural use on land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (AAC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop protocols for application referral to the AAC with the intent of demonstrating if the application will support or benefit agriculture</li> <li>Refer ALR applications to the AAC, with staff to provide necessary available information for the AAC review</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
SUPPORTING A SECURE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE	2.3.1 Protect Agricultural Land for Agricultural Purposes (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support strategies for edge planning in higher urban-populated areas of the PRRD where the Agricultural Land Reserve abuts non-ALR land (AAC, BCMA, ALC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas at the interface of urban/rural uses where conflict may occur</li> <li>Remind landowners and developers about agricultural uses and Farm Practices Protection Act</li> <li>Prepare information about appropriate edge planning techniques and standards</li> <li>Provide information to affected agricultural land owners and local governments</li> <li>Encourage local governments to follow through with agreements on buffer zones</li> </ul>	Short term and ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare an agricultural impact guideline for use by the AAC to help address ways that an application for exclusion, non-agricultural use or subdivision will support or be of benefit to agriculture. The assessment process may consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ type of application whether for removal or boundary adjustment or non-agricultural use or subdivision identified on agricultural land</li> <li>✓ size of the parcel in question</li> <li>✓ location of the parcel</li> <li>✓ impact on the ALR boundary and adjacent agricultural parcels</li> <li>✓ assessment of how the proposal will support or be of benefit to agriculture</li> <li>✓ assessment of possible options for the proposed use that could be undertaken on non-agricultural land</li> <li>✓ assessment of the agricultural capability and suitability of the parcel</li> <li>✓ assessment of the present and adjacent land use</li> <li>✓ assessment of whether the application will result in additional pressure for further applications or increase the expectation for further applications</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine and enhance the specific criteria to be considered for an agricultural impact guideline in consultation with the AAC</li> <li>Ensure applicant for subdivision or removal bears any cost of conducting an agricultural impact review, if relevant</li> <li>Refer the results of the completed agricultural impact review to Regional Board with appropriate recommendations</li> </ul>	Short term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
SUPPORTING A SECURE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE	2.3.1 Protect Agricultural Land for Agricultural Purposes (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate, in cooperation with the Agricultural Land Commission and larger municipalities in the PRRD, a boundary review study of the ALR with particular emphasis on areas where the ALR boundary abuts urban development (AAC,ALC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop general guidelines for the boundary review</li> <li>Review the merits of a boundary review study with Regional Board</li> <li>Initiate discussions on the merits of the study with the Agricultural Land Commission</li> </ul>	Long term
	2.3.2 Support Agricultural Access to Available Crown Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support producers seeking access to Crown Land for agricultural uses (PRRD, AAC, other agricultural organizations, Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Agricultural Land Commission)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with appropriate stakeholders, and using available maps in the PRRD, determine Crown land that would be most appropriately used for agricultural purposes</li> <li>Partner with producer associations where appropriate to clarify specific issues restricting producer access to Crown land</li> <li>Support including Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the Agricultural Land Reserve, if appropriate</li> <li>Encourage the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to process applications for grazing licences in the Peace River Regional District</li> <li>Encourage the M of FLNRO and the ALC to determine appropriate criteria for the direct sale of Crown lands to producers</li> </ul>	Short term
SUPPORTING PROGRESSIVE PRODUCER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	2.4.1 Encourage Research and Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue providing research and extension services through Lacombe and Beaverlodge Research Stations in Alberta (AAC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current research and extension services provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Lacombe and Beaverlodge Research Farm</li> <li>Liaise with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada when necessary to facilitate communication between the agricultural community and Research Centre staff</li> <li>Encourage local producers to provide Agriculture and Agri-Food staff with suggestions to encourage programs and services that strengthen agriculture in the PRRD</li> <li>Communicate and promote research findings to producers in the PRRD where possible</li> </ul>	Short term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
SUPPORTING PROGRESSIVE PRODUCER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	2.4.1 Encourage Research and Extension (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the BC Ministry of Agriculture to continue providing extension services and to expand the Regional Agrologist Network to the PRRD (AAC, BCMA)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current BC Ministry of Agriculture extension services and programs available to agriculture in the PRRD.</li> <li>Identify and document gaps in extension needs and services</li> <li>Continue to liaise with BCMA staff to encourage programs and services that strengthen agriculture in the PRRD, including the extension of services into the PRRD</li> <li>Provide feedback and recommendations to BCMA on how existing programs and services may be improved to better serve the agricultural community</li> <li>Promote BCMA programs and services to the agricultural community</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the introduction of high-speed Internet access throughout the Regional District</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify regions without high-speed internet access</li> <li>Encourage the telecommunications sector to implement high-speed internet service throughout the Regional District</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support new and existing leadership development programs for agricultural producers (B.C. 4-H, CFBMC and CAHRC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote leadership development programs for youth including the Peace River branches of the B.C. 4-H.</li> <li>Review leadership development resources available through Canada Farm Business Management Council and Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council</li> <li>Encourage the development of regional leadership programs</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support training and networking opportunities for agricultural producers and other appropriate parties to come together and address important issues facing the agricultural community (AAC, producer associations)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify partners in planning and carrying out training and networking opportunities including producer associations, non-profits, and academic institutions</li> <li>Support development of live interactive webinars</li> <li>Continue to encourage regular meetings within the agricultural community</li> </ul>	Short term

Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
SUPPORTING PROGRESSIVE PRODUCER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	2.4.1 Encourage Research and Extension (Cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct, in cooperation with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, at least two producer-to-producer extension activities to stimulate longer term availability of practical, regionally specific extension services (AAC, BCMA, Producer Associations, IAF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the merits of producer-led extension strategy and activities with the agricultural community</li> <li>Provide examples of producer extension strategies occurring in other jurisdictions such as Metro Vancouver's Regional Food System Strategy Roundtables, Community Futures Fraser Fort George Beyond the Market Program and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems Sustainable Agriculture Research Center at University of Wisconsin – Madison</li> <li>Identify extension needs that are currently not being met</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage ongoing work on how agriculture will be impacted by climate change by advocating for additional research funding and by supporting organizations and groups when obstacles arise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with producers to determine financial requirements</li> <li>Assist, where possible, with funding proposals</li> <li>Ensure relevant proposals indicate a reasonable return on investment</li> </ul>	Short term
	2.4.2 Education and Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support industry efforts to encourage people to enter agricultural production, through the work of educational institutions and the agricultural community (AAC, educators, commodity groups)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote benefits of working in agriculture</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partner organizations willing to introduce an appropriate mentorship program where experienced producers may assist others wishing to start production in the PRRD (AAC, IAF, CFBMC, commodity groups)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research successful mentoring programs in other jurisdictions</li> <li>Develop outline for a mentorship program suitable for the PRRD</li> <li>Seek experienced producers willing to act as mentors to others</li> </ul>	Medium term
	2.4.3 Support Management of Risks in Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue offering and improving Business Risk Management programs available through Growing Forward 2 (AAC, BCMA)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Business Risk Management programs offered by Growing Forward 2</li> <li>Provide comments and suggestions for other programs or program improvements where relevant</li> <li>Support program improvements based on feedback from the agricultural community</li> </ul>	Short term



Area	Initiative	Policy	Action	Implementation	Priority
SUPPORTING PROGRESSIVE PRODUCER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support agricultural community adaptation to immediate and long-term challenges posed by climate change (AAC)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with the BC Agriculture Council on the Adaptation strategy</li> <li>Monitor the implementation of the strategy set out in the Peace Region BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy</li> </ul>	Short term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support agricultural community workshops and strategies based on the model established through the BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy to help the agricultural community to address other risks associated with agricultural production in the PRRD (AAC, BCMA, Agricultural Community)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to liaise with key contacts in the agricultural community to identify priority areas</li> </ul>	Short term
	2.4.4 Encourage Agri-tourism, Value-added and Vertical Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and encourage the agricultural industry to introduce more agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration in the PRRD (AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions, Northern BC Tourism Association, local tourism groups such as Tourism Dawson Creek)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider agri-tourism and culinary tourism as a possible driver for further economic development in the PRRD</li> <li>Partner with other organizations interested in tourism</li> </ul>	Short term
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In cooperation with the BCMA introduce appropriate seminars or workshops to provide further ideas of agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration (AAC, BCMA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider seminars or workshops in cooperation with BCMA</li> <li>Identify ideas and suggestions for agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration</li> </ul>	Short to medium term
	2.4.5 Encourage Environmental Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support guidelines and programs provided by appropriate government bodies and producer associations for protection of air, soil and water (AAC, BCMA, AAFC, producer associations)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicize relevant programs where possible</li> <li>Encourage producers to participate in appropriate programs</li> <li>Support appropriate incentives to encourage producer involvement</li> </ul>	Short term



# 1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides:

- role of the Regional Agricultural Plan
- a general overview of the Peace River Regional District
- a summary of the main issues addressed
- the Guiding Principles developed from the project's terms of reference and a vision for the future of agriculture in the PRRD
- comments on the four strategy areas identified for the Regional Agricultural Plan
- a description of the planning area and
- an overview of the planning process that was used for development of the Regional Agricultural Plan.

## 1.1 ROLE OF THE REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL PLAN

The PRRD Regional Agricultural Plan was developed over a period of approximately three years, beginning with development of the terms of reference in early 2012 and with the bulk of the planning process occurring in late 2012 and 2013. As the plan is implemented, it is expected to position the PRRD for increased levels of agricultural development.

Upon adoption by Regional Board, the Regional Agricultural Plan is expected to be a reference document for the Regional Board and staff. It will act as a guide for the work plans of staff, the Agricultural Advisory Committee, and other partners. The Regional Agricultural Plan contains material relevant to future Official Community Plans in all areas related to agriculture and agricultural development.

## 1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PRRD

The Peace River Regional District is located in North-East British Columbia on the prairie side of the Rocky Mountains. The boundaries contain approximately twelve million hectares (46,000 square miles) of land, 11% within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Most of the population, 70%, resides in the urban municipalities of Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope, Taylor and Pouce Coupe. Most of the productive agricultural land is located in the rural areas surrounding the main population centres.

The topography of the area varies from Rocky Mountains in the west to the Interior Plains in the eastern sections. Most of the land is drained by the Peace River or its tributaries. The northern portion of the Regional District is drained by tributaries of the Fort Nelson River.

The PRRD provides local government services to approximately 60,000 people in seven incorporated municipalities and four electoral areas. Often for convenience and point of orientation, and established by custom over the years, the PRRD considers three sub-regions identified by the nearest nodal community or service area. In this context, West Peace is identified by those in the Chetwynd area, North Peace by those who look to Fort St John as their nodal community and South Peace is identified with Dawson Creek.

Working cooperatively, the electoral areas and member municipalities of the Regional District provide a wide range of services including:

- noxious weed control
- regional and community recreation
- fire protection
- regional solid waste management
- rural water services
- sewage collection and disposal
- parks

- building inspection
- television rebroadcasting.

The Regional District is a federation of urban and rural areas and is governed by a 12-member Board. Eight of the Directors are appointed by the seven municipalities and the other four are elected by voters in the four electoral areas. To learn more about the PRRD see <http://prrd.bc.ca/about/index.php>.

### 1.3 MAIN ISSUES ADDRESSED

Based on consultation with the industry and the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the following main issues affecting agriculture in the PRRD were identified:

- producer ability to compete with other jurisdictions is affected by the BC carbon tax, higher costs for inputs in the Peace and inadequate infrastructure available such as roads and rail service and processing centres
- producer ability to find appropriate additional land such as acquiring needed Crown land for pasturing or other agricultural uses, selected removal of agricultural land from agricultural production, and increasing amounts of foreign or non-resident land ownership for rural estates results in land out of production or not available to local producers for purchase, rent or lease
- the presence of the oil and gas industry is having an impact on agriculture by:
  - ✓ making it more difficult for agricultural producers to get labour and other inputs at reasonable cost
  - ✓ affecting agricultural production by having wells on agricultural land
  - ✓ affecting agricultural production with the cumulative, contributing effect of additional weeds and impact on bio-security
  - ✓ affecting “sense of community” in rural areas by contributing to fewer people in agriculture and creating additional noise, traffic, and dust and uncertainty for the future of agriculture including a capacity to plan for the future when faced with a fast-moving oil and gas industry
  - ✓ affecting recruitment of young people to agriculture when higher paying alternatives are available in oil and gas
  - ✓ affecting infrastructure by putting additional pressure on roads, railways (reduced capacity for agriculture), the power grid and damaging power and telephone lines
  - ✓ affecting the future of the area due to unknown impact of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) as a means of gas removal
  - ✓ creating concerns related to the removal of pipelines and other infrastructure when use is completed and the pipelines are abandoned
- agriculture does not have appropriate levels of decision-maker support and the decline in producer numbers has resulted in limited incentives for producers when compared to other industries, inattention paid to agricultural issues at policy decision-making levels and rules and “red tape” that are not “producer friendly”

- regulations from the Agricultural Land Commission and evolution away from the original four pillars (The Farm Income Assurance Act, The Agricultural Credit Act, The Farm Product Industry Act and the Agricultural Land Development Act) when the ALCA was introduced, make it difficult for producers to expand their businesses or use their existing land in a “reasonable manner”
- producer ability to expand and grow the agricultural industry has been affected by reduced levels of available education, less research related to agricultural issues, and reduced extension services to assist producers with staying current on agricultural practices
- less predictable weather patterns and increased numbers of extreme weather events leave producers more vulnerable to crop damage, risk of new pests, increasing levels of disease and weeds and decline in honeybee populations, and there are insufficient risk management programs to support producers facing these additional risks
- water availability and assurance of supply is a concern for the agricultural industry due to irrigation requirements in the growing season (when other water demands may also be higher) and the need for water as a fundamental requirement for agricultural production.

## 1.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VISION

The Regional Agricultural Plan was developed in the context of six guiding principles and a vision that arose through public and agricultural producer consultation.

### Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were identified in consultation with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and supported by the Regional Board. They are based on the terms of reference for the project and provide the context for the Regional Agricultural Plan. The Plan will:

- contain a vision for the future of agriculture that will include a permanent role for agriculture as an essential component of the physical, ecological, social, and economic well being of the Regional District
- contain policy and governance items and recommendations for the future development of community plans and a regional growth strategy
- identify changes in business management which could be implemented by producers or agricultural organizations
- identify strategies to enhance agriculture in the context of competition with other land uses such as oil and gas and forestry and mining
- address current issues with policies and recommendations to ensure the best possible future for agriculture
- identify agricultural business practices that will help the industry to flourish.

## Vision

Based on a review of the options and suggestions and with consideration for the guiding principles, the following vision for the future of agriculture in the Peace River Regional District emerged:

*The Peace River Regional District supports agricultural development and protection of agricultural land for a sustainable and profitable agricultural industry*

## 1.5 THE FOUR STRATEGY AREAS

The above issues were addressed in the Regional Agricultural Plan using four broader strategy areas containing 20 initiatives. The initiatives have been presented with selected policies to be adopted and a series of actions to be taken in order to further address the issues.

The four strategy areas include three that are primarily related to policies and actions to be undertaken by the Regional District. The fourth strategy area identifies, consistent with the planning project's terms of reference, the importance of producers identifying and following acceptable management practices. By doing so, producers will continue to enjoy support from citizens for maintaining and enhancing agricultural development in the PRRD.

### 1. Promoting A Welcoming Business Environment

A welcoming attitude for agricultural expansion among Regional District staff and Regional Board will contribute to agricultural development. Promoting a welcoming business environment includes establishing better communication processes between the agricultural industry and the PRRD. In addition, members of the agricultural community identified the need for increased communication and networking within the sector.

### 2. Encouraging Necessary Services and Infrastructure

Having the required services and infrastructure is critical for producers who may wish to expand their businesses and for the attraction of others to agriculture.

### 3. Supporting a Secure Agricultural Land Base

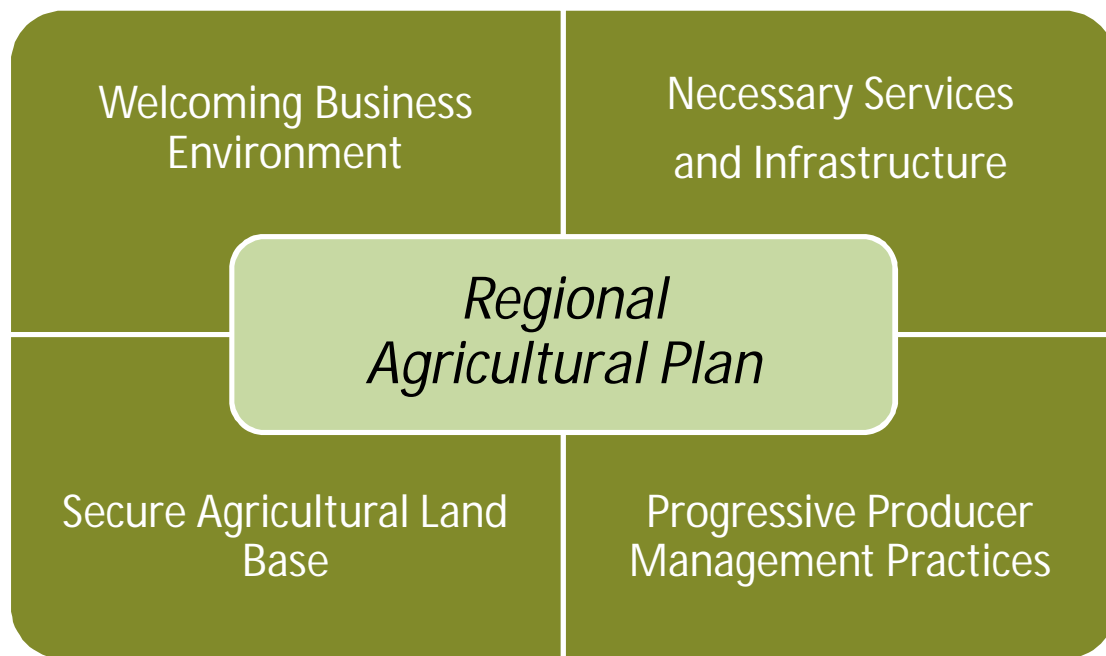
Supporting a secure agricultural land base is consistent with the Regional District's efforts to encourage agricultural development that can lead to increasing levels of agricultural production.

In the PRRD, 11% of the land base is within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

#### 4. Supporting Progressive Producer Management Practices

Although there is generally positive support for agriculture in the PRRD, producers must continue to manage their operations in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of other citizens. By doing so, support for additional agricultural development will continue.

Figure 1: Strategy Areas of the Regional Agricultural Plan

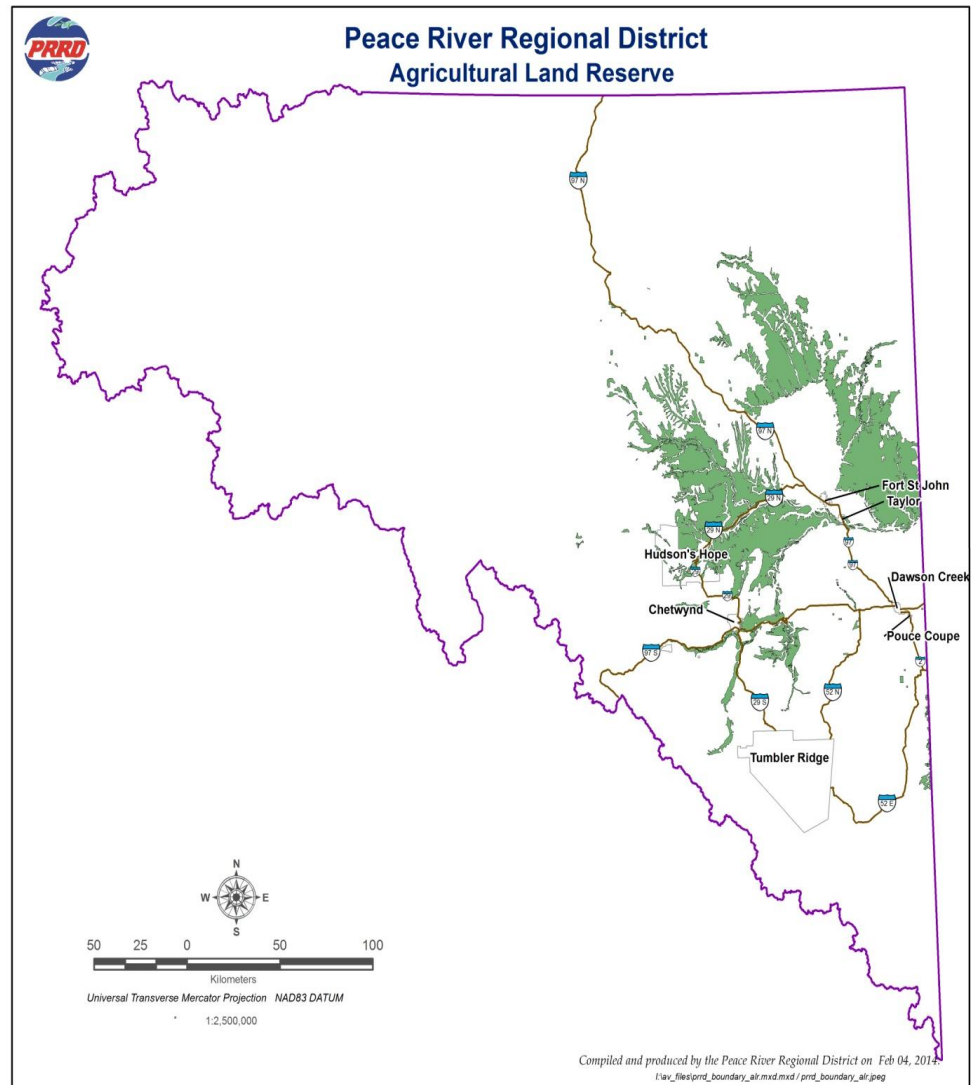


### 1.6 THE PLANNING AREA

In British Columbia, there are 4,623,841 ha (11,425,354 ac) included in the ALR and 27% of BC's ALR land is located in the Peace River Regional District. The map in Figure 2 illustrates land in the Agricultural Land Reserve in the PRRD and land within the ALR represents the main focus of the planning area. The total land area of the PRRD is about 12 million hectares (actually 11,933,660 ha or 29,487,669 ac), with 1,288,967 ha (3,184,993 ac), or 11% of the entire land base, in the Agricultural Land Reserve. Although most agricultural land does lie within the ALR there is a considerable amount of land suitable for agricultural production (in all 7 main classes of agricultural land) that is not contained within the boundaries of the ALR. Some land used for agriculture that is outside of the ALR, may be Crown Land leased to producers, or other land, generally used for cattle production.

Figure 2: PRRD Agricultural Land Reserve

The agricultural land in the ALR is clustered in the east/central part of the Regional District and around the areas where the largest numbers of people are living, namely in the communities of Fort St John, Dawson Creek, and other municipalities relatively close to these larger centers.



## 1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The following four phases were completed in the planning process:

### *Phase 1 – Start Up*

This phase involved meeting with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and reviewing the main issues facing agriculture in the PRRD.

### *Phase 2 – Background Report and Profile of Agriculture*



This phase involved the preparation of a Background Report. The Report provides an overview of the Regional District, selected agricultural statistics and maps describing the extent of agriculture in the Regional District, the current context including agricultural capability and a summary of legislation affecting the industry.

#### *Phase 3 – Public Consultation*

The public consultation process involved two workshops with the AAC, thirty-seven telephone interviews with stakeholders and thirteen consultation meetings in various parts of the PRRD.

#### *Phase 4 – Regional Agricultural Plan Completion*

This phase involved the preparation of sample initiatives, including policies and actions, for review by the AAC, preparation of a Draft Regional Agricultural Plan for review by the AAC and at three sub-region meetings and finalization of the Regional Agricultural Plan for approval by the Regional Board.



## 2 REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL PLAN

The Regional Agricultural Plan comprises four strategy areas:

- 2.1 Promoting a welcoming business environment
- 2.2 Encouraging necessary services and infrastructure
- 2.3 Supporting a secure agricultural land base
- 2.4 Supporting progressive producer management practices.

Numbered initiatives are identified for each strategy area. For each initiative, a discussion explores the issue and it is followed by an objective and, as appropriate, policies to be adopted and actions to be accomplished. Implementation of policies and actions is outlined, including suggested timelines, resources required, and potential partners. Timelines are short term (the first 5 years), medium term (6 to 10 years), and long term (11 to 20 years). By accepting the Regional Agricultural Plan, the Regional Board indicates its commitment to adopting the policies and supporting the identified actions, often in partnership with other agencies and groups.

### 2.1 PROMOTING A WELCOMING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Peace River Regional District can contribute to success for the agricultural industry by building support among Regional staff and Regional Board for agricultural development. The purpose of this strategy area is to create the conditions that welcome agricultural development in the PRRD.

#### 2.1.1 Support for Agriculture by Regional Board and Staff

Supporting agriculture at the Regional Board political level and among staff members sends a message to producers that their interests will receive welcome consideration in the PRRD.

Discussion:

The benefits of creating a culture where agriculture is supported and where agricultural development is encouraged may be enhanced by positive handling of requests from producers by PRRD staff and understanding of agricultural challenges by Regional Board. Regional District staff is often the first point of contact for producers wishing to expand their businesses and new entrants to agriculture who are starting their careers in the business.

In Canada, agriculture is managed and regulated by the federal, provincial and local levels of government. The federal government may regulate agricultural producers through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada or through other departments and agencies such as Environment Canada. The provincial government regulates agricultural production through provincial legislation developed by the BC Ministry of Agriculture or other Ministries such as the Ministry of the Environment. The *Local*

*Government Act* and *Community Charter*, managed by the provincial government, identify the role of local governments in zoning and land use planning, for example. Agricultural producers find it more difficult to create viable businesses if there are inconsistencies in policy among the different levels of government.

The Peace River Regional District provides local government services to approximately 60,000 people in seven incorporated municipalities and four electoral areas. Working cooperatively, the electoral areas and member municipalities of the Regional District provide a wide range of services including:

- noxious weed control
- regional and community recreation
- fire protection
- regional solid waste management
- rural water services
- sewage collection and disposal
- parks
- building inspection
- television rebroadcasting.

The Regional District is a federation of urban and rural areas and is governed by a 12-member Board. Eight of the Directors are appointed by the seven municipalities and the other four are elected by voters in the four electoral areas.

Regional Board established an Agricultural Advisory Committee in 2002. The AAC has an extensive and inclusive mandate to provide advice to Regional Board on issues affecting agriculture.

#### Objective:

To assure agricultural producers that agriculture is important in the PRRD and to support agriculture at the Regional District level.

#### Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support strengthening agricultural development in the Regional District consistent with the goals and principles of PRRD planning documents (AAC)

#### Implementation:

- Continue to Investigate options
- Determine priority items
- Appoint Regional Board member to “spearhead” efforts to enhance the agricultural industry where possible

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Encourage regional, provincial, and federal governments to establish agricultural policies and protocols that are sensitive to the needs of agricultural producers and processors (AAC, North and South Peace EDCs, commodity groups)</li> <li>✓ Support positive staff contact with individuals and all industry groups, including agriculture, wishing to expand or establish their businesses (AAC, EDCs)</li> <li>✓ Support increasing staff knowledge about agriculture by supporting staff training and attendance at relevant agricultural workshops and seminars (AAC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with stakeholders to develop appropriate policy initiatives</li> <li>• Encourage appropriate agencies to support the needs of agricultural producers and processors</li> <li>• Encourage staff training related to agriculture and agricultural processing</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

#### Resources:

Implementation will require staff and committee time and training costs to be included in future budgets.

### 2.1.2 Ensure an Effective Agricultural Advisory Committee

It is anticipated that the Agricultural Advisory Committee will coordinate, and provide leadership to, the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan. An effective Agricultural Advisory Committee can provide Regional Board with advice and solutions to assist contentious issues such as removal or rezoning of agricultural land. To maintain agricultural development and assess progress against objectives, the AAC will ensure the collection and reporting of data relevant to agriculture.

#### Discussion:

The Agricultural Advisory Committee was established as an advisory committee to Regional Board with Terms of Reference adopted in early 2002 and first members introduced later that Spring.

Ensuring effective members are on the AAC will require appropriate representation of the agricultural industry while maintaining an AAC membership number that is reasonable and efficient.

The purpose of the Agricultural Advisory Committee is “to provide advice to the Regional Board on matters relating to, or influencing, agriculture in the region, to encourage and enhance the sustainability and vitality of agriculture in the region, to provide a forum for focusing the concerns of

agriculture in the region and the AAC will advise the Peace River Regional District Board on agriculture issues within the region”<sup>2</sup>

The mandate of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, as it was designed, is broad enough to ensure the committee is active and effective in assisting the PRRD to encourage agricultural development. Selected indicators of agricultural development in the Regional District may be monitored by the AAC to assess the impact of the strategies identified in the Regional Agricultural Plan. The following selected indicators may be relevant:

- increase and/or change in marketing used by producers such as:
  - ✓ changes in sales through farmers’ markets
  - ✓ changes in direct marketing opportunities
  - ✓ volume of local sales of local products
  - ✓ evidence of changes in agri-tourism
- number of agricultural operations and percentage of land in production
  - ✓ number of agricultural operations sold
  - ✓ number of beginning producer start-ups
  - ✓ export sales of local products
- number of applications for removal, or non-agricultural use, in the ALR
- number of applications for sub-division in the ALR
- number of relevant agricultural education courses and programs available to producers in the PRRD and level of use of these programs by producers
- number of complaints about agricultural operations received by the Regional District or through Regional Board
- number of positive comments about agriculture
- anecdotal evidence about value-added activity
- anecdotal evidence related to trends in agriculture.

Objective:

To provide for an active and effective Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support having an active and effective Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)

Implementation:

- Refer agricultural issues to the AAC
- Provide sufficient staff support
- Regularly (every 2 years) review AAC membership to ensure effective members and appropriate representation

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<sup>2</sup> AAC Terms of Reference, February 14, 2011.

#### Actions (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Initiate regular, ongoing monitoring by the Agricultural Advisory Committee of selected indicators affecting agriculture in the PRRD (AAC, staff)
- ✓ Request an annual work plan from the Agricultural Advisory Committee and ensure an appropriate budget for completion of the work plan
- ✓ Provide updates to the Agricultural Profile (Background Report), consistent with the release of Agricultural Statistics relevant to the PRRD, (AAC, BCMA, IAF)

#### Implementation:

- Determine appropriate agricultural indicators
- Report regularly on selected indicators
- Ensure that an annual work plan is identified
- Recognize an appropriate annual budget
- Request the Profile (Background Report) be updated every 5 years, as new Census of Agriculture data becomes available

#### Resources:

Implementation of these policies and actions will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets. The cost of implementing the first action item will be identified in future line department budgets. It is estimated that each profile update (scheduled for 2016 and 2022) will cost \$10,000.

### 2.1.3 Provide Regular Consultation with Producers

Regularly consulting with local producers on agricultural issues and concerns can keep the Regional District more actively involved with agriculture and will contribute to greater understanding and support for agricultural development. Consultation may occur on an individual or group basis or with active local agricultural organizations. Regular consultation will enhance a welcoming business environment for agriculture.

#### Discussion:

Agricultural producers prefer to operate their businesses undisturbed and unregulated. But they are involved with food production, potentially on about 11% of the Regional District's entire land base, and most of the agricultural activity occurs adjacent to, or close by to, the main population centres of the PRRD. How agricultural land is managed and how food is grown is of concern to all citizens, whether involved in agriculture or not. Public interest in food safety and quality and environmental protection of air, land and water has contributed to many of the issues and concerns, and regulations, faced by producers.

Producers are also impacted by public concerns affecting how they handle livestock and how they deal with wildlife that may use their land as habitat. Since most British Columbians, and most residents of the PRRD, are removed from direct involvement with agriculture, the agricultural community may sometimes feel isolated and threatened by increasing levels of regulation and conflict. The often unspoken implication is that producers must be abusing their land and animals.

Sometimes regulations that impact producers directly do not appear to them to be reasonable. It is important for the Regional District to be aware of producer concerns, sensitive to conflicts they face, and able to explain the rationale behind unpopular regulations or disagreements.

Producers opposing regulations or other activities that may affect their businesses are not necessarily against the broader intent of the regulation or result. Generally speaking, producers oppose regulations when they have not been properly involved in their development and are not given credit for how much they are doing already to ensure their practices protect and enhance their animals and their land, air and water.

Regular consultation with agricultural producers may help mitigate some issues and concerns. Members of the agricultural community appreciate the opportunity to provide input related to Regional Board policies and directions.

Some jurisdictions in other parts of British Columbia have found it helpful to maintain active Farmers' Institutes, or other "ad hoc" local associations, to provide a readily available group to discuss agricultural issues and concerns, and express those concerns to decision-makers. These local Institutes or associations do not replace active commodity associations or other groups that are generally part of a larger provincial or national producer organization.

The consultation process for the Regional Agricultural Plan identified that agriculture could benefit from a stronger voice. As the community continues to urbanize and as other industries continue to expand, numbers of agricultural producers will continue to decline relative to the non-agricultural community. In addition, some people in rural areas suggested it is becoming increasingly difficult for agriculturally-related issues to receive decision-maker attention.

Although there are strong commodity-based agricultural organizations in the PRRD, it may be difficult to find ways to address general agricultural issues that may not be commodity specific.

As identified above, the PRRD has established an Agricultural Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Regional Board on matters relating to, or influencing, agriculture in the PRRD.

Objective:

To ensure producer issues and concerns are heard at the Regional District level.

Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

Support regular contact with agricultural producers as a component of effective communications

Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

Request the Agricultural Advisory Committee meet regularly with producers (AAC, local agricultural communities)

Encourage the development of local producer organizations or other locally-based associations or groups (AAC, agricultural communities)

Implementation:

Implementation:

- Hold at least one AAC meeting each year in one of the three sub-regions of the PRRD ensuring at least one meeting is held in the three sub regions over a three year period
- Invite local producers and/or producer groups to participate in the meeting by joining the AAC members for a portion of the meeting
- Use existing agricultural organizations and groups to provide contacts to invite
- Provide for some discussion of local agricultural issues and concerns
- Ensure follow up reporting on the outcome of the discussions is done
- Provide information to local producers on where other active producer groups or associations are operating
- Provide consultation and organizational help (where possible) to producers who would like to form a local association or group to communicate more easily with the PRRD

Resources:

Implementation of these policy items will require staff and AAC time to be included in future line budgets.



#### 2.1.4 Foster Communication among Resource Industries

Better communication among those in conflict can often result in better understanding and reduced disagreement. During the consultation phase in the development of the Regional Agricultural Plan, some conflict between the agricultural industry and other industries, notably oil and gas, was noted.

##### Discussion:

Conflict among those with conflicting interests, that will occur from time to time, is generally considered to be a normal by-product of growth and economic development. However, left alone, conflict can eventually lead to further resentment and the escalation of negative and unproductive activities such as adversarial legal action and retaliatory behavior.

The agricultural industry is important in the PRRD and the Agricultural Land Reserve contains about 11% of the PRRD's entire land base. The oil and gas industry is significant in the PRRD and the Oil and Gas Commission has a delegation agreement with the Agricultural Land Commission to address ALR concerns vis a vis oil and gas exploration and development. Much of the agricultural land within the ALR is located where the most oil and gas activity is taking place such as the Montney natural gas basin. Much of the PRRD agricultural land is also located around the larger urban centres such as Fort St John and Dawson Creek.

There are many experienced agricultural producers in the PRRD who are concerned about the possible negative activities of other industries that can have a direct impact on agricultural production.

There may be important contributions that could be made to PRRD development by providing more opportunities for progressive members of various industries to meet and discuss development issues and to create meaningful working relationships with each other. A modest amount of funding to provide refreshments and meeting amenities may be all that is required for this process to begin.

Relevant courses and supporting training materials, either developed originally or amended using materials from other jurisdictions, may be developed as a by-product of this communication process to assist the agricultural industry to increase awareness of its activities.

##### Objective:

To address issues for agriculture and other industries caused by industry growth and development.

## Policies (Partners):

### The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support effective and meaningful communication and networking among all industry leaders and industry workers in the PRRD (AAC, ALC, BCMA)
- ✓ Support industry efforts to address all issues and concerns that may affect those operating in other industries

## Actions (Partners)

### The PRRD will:

- ✓ Create a Working Group to be composed of industry leaders and workers (agriculture, oil and gas, representative industry workers) who will meet with PRRD Senior personnel to review industry issues and concerns (AAC, PRRD Senior personnel, Industry leaders, industry workers)

## Implementation:

- Assess current levels of communication among main industry leaders and workers in the PRRD
- Contact industry leaders to determine merits of addressing local issues
- Identify and list the issues affecting agriculture on a 3 – 5 year basis
- Identify and list the issues and concerns of other main industry groups
- Continue to identify options and ideas for addressing these issues

## Implementation:

- Develop terms of reference for a Working Group
- Meet with landowners as required
- Seek support from selected industry leaders and workers
- Hold initial meetings to review issues and concerns
- Continue to identify options and ideas for addressing issues such as training materials, courses etc.
- Provide a forum to advise industry leaders and workers about extent of activity of all industries in in the PRRD
- Ensure follow up reporting and action occurs
- Consider a schedule for ongoing meetings coordinated by the PRRD and possibly held every three months with reporting on progress between meetings

## Resources:

Implementation of these action items will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets. Modest additional budget may be required to support the initial start for the Working Group but it is anticipated meeting space and refreshments can be contained within existing budgets.

### 2.1.5 Encourage Regulations Reflect PRRD Agriculture

Development of the agricultural industry in the PRRD will be facilitated by regulations that ensure relevance to PRRD agricultural conditions.

#### Discussion:

Agricultural production units are larger in the PRRD than in other parts of British Columbia, as much as five times larger on average. Also, agricultural producers in the PRRD have often enjoyed producing their products in a more isolated environment with less influence from neighbours who may not be involved in agriculture. Because much of the good agricultural land is located near the larger urban centres in the PRRD, the impact of other citizens on agricultural production is expected to increase over time.

During the consultation phase producers expressed concern about rules and regulations impacting them that were more likely to reflect agricultural conditions in other parts of BC than the Peace.

Concerns have also been expressed by local PRRD producers about selected regulations within the PRRD that do not adequately reflect their needs and wishes. Most recently, some members of the rural community voiced concerns about the PRRD Building Bylaw No. 1996 and its possible impact on agricultural operations in the Regional District.

In order to adequately reflect producers' concerns about external regulations that may not reflect PRRD production conditions, it is important for the PRRD to first ensure that its own regulations make sense for agricultural production in the Peace. Further extensive and regular consultations with the agricultural community, as identified in the initiative "Provide Regular Consultation with Producers" in this Regional Agricultural Plan, may contribute positively to the challenge of helping regulations make sense to producers.

Reviewing existing and future rules and regulations within the PRRD with an appropriate "agricultural lens" may be a useful process to ensure PRRD rules and regulations remain relevant to agricultural production.

Applying a similar "agricultural lens" to other externally-developed rules and regulations may help to ensure these rules and regulations make sense to PRRD producers.

It is expected the following items may be included in the development of an appropriate "agricultural lens" for the PRRD:

- Explanation, or identification, of how the rule or regulation may benefit agriculture
- Explanation, or identification, of how the rule or regulation may hinder agriculture
- An assessment of the cost implications for agricultural producers
- An assessment of how costs may be mitigated by funding available

- An assessment of the inconvenience of the rule or regulation in terms of additional time needed to comply
- A review of the timeline available to agricultural producers in terms of adopting the rule or regulation.

#### Objective:

To support processes and reviews to encourage rules and regulations developed in the Regional District and at the Provincial level be relevant to agricultural production conditions in the PRRD.

#### Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support the concept that rules and regulations developed by the PRRD should reflect the interests and needs of most PRRD industries and citizens (AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)

#### Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Develop an appropriate “agricultural lens” to review existing and future rules and regulations developed by the PRRD and applicable to the PRRD when developed by other bodies such as the provincial government (AAC, BCMA)

#### Implementation:

- Review existing bylaws and planning documents to ensure relevance

#### Implementation:

- Review requirements and concerns of the agricultural community
- Prepare appropriate terms of reference for a project to further develop the “agricultural lens” for reviewing rules and regulations of the PRRD
- Ensure consultation with appropriate members of the agricultural community
- Seek appropriate funding to further refine and test the “agricultural lens”

#### Resources:

The cost of implementing the action item will include staff and AAC time as identified in future line department budgets. Costs for the PRRD share of the study to develop and test an appropriate “agricultural lens” is estimated at \$10,000.

### 2.1.6 Encourage Partnerships

Building partnerships within the Regional District, and beyond its boundaries, is an appropriate way to support agricultural production and viability. Effective partnerships with other agencies and groups may be a significant contributor to implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan.

#### Discussion:

Studies have demonstrated the merits of developing partnerships to achieve greater benefits for everyone. A study commissioned by the Agricultural Institute of Canada identified “relationship building” as one of the important characteristics of leading farmers.<sup>3</sup>

Identifying appropriate partners, and building working relationships with them, is important for encouraging agricultural development. Potential local partners that have been helpful in the past, and may be more active in the future, are the two Economic Development Commissions. The South Peace Economic Development Commission is supported by the municipalities of Pouce Coupe, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge and Electoral Areas D and E of the Regional District. The North Peace Economic Development Commission is supported by the City of Fort St John, the District of Taylor, the District of Hudson’s Hope and Electoral Areas B and C of the Regional District.

Both Economic Development Commissions have played a role with agriculture in the past and could become more active in the future. The Economic Development Commissions may be able to access some support funding for various agricultural development initiatives.

Some of the important local producer organizations such as the British Columbia Cattlemen’s Association (often represented at a more local level by Associations such as the BC South Peace River Stockmen’s Association) the Peace Region Forage Seed Association and Grain Producers’ Association are potential partners to provide support for agricultural development in the PRRD.

Helpful and useful partners also include the PRRD’s education institutions through School Districts 59 (Peace River South) and 60 (Peace River North) and educators at the post-secondary levels. The University of Northern BC has conducted some research in the PRRD and there may be merit to encouraging greater involvement of UNBC in the Regional District. The UNBC does consider itself to be the University of relevance to Northern BC and its values include being “responsive to the region it serves”. It may be that more valuable partnerships with the University could be enhanced by greater contact with the needs of the agricultural community in the PRRD.

Northern Lights College with locations in Fort St John and Dawson Creek, is an important partner for the agricultural industry. Some of the colleges and universities in Alberta are also of considerable relevance to the PRRD. Because the agriculture of the Regional District has much in common with parts of Alberta, partnerships with colleges such as Olds and Grande Prairie Regional College (Fairview

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<sup>3</sup> Saskatchewan Agrivision Corporation Inc., *Re-Defining Agriculture*, prepared for the Agricultural Institute of Canada, February 2007.

campus) may be relevant. The University of Alberta in Edmonton is also a potential academic oriented partner.

Forming partnerships to facilitate the expansion of specific agricultural industries such as beef production or the production of selected crops may be appropriate for reaching the short, medium, and longer term goals of the Regional Agricultural Plan.

#### Objective:

To encourage partnerships to enhance the goals of the Regional Agricultural Plan.

#### Policy (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support partnerships with other organizations and agencies and working together to enhance agricultural production (AAC, agricultural community, South and North Economic Development Commissions) commodity groups, other agencies)

#### Implementation:

- Develop a list of potential partners
- Facilitate meetings and contact with potential partners
- Encourage partnerships between organizations with common goals

#### Resources:

Implementation will require staff and committee time to be included in future line department budgets.

### 2.1.7 Promote Agriculture

Promotion of agriculture and its role in the economic strength of the PRRD will demonstrate a welcoming business environment for agriculture and contribute to increasing agricultural development.

Studies of the economic impact of agriculture have been completed in other municipalities in BC and have shown that, when the economic contribution of agriculture to the total community was better understood, citizens and municipal leaders showed more positive acceptance of agriculture as an important economic contributor.

A brochure may be useful to highlight the role of agriculture in the Regional District, including discussion of normal farm practices resulting from a productive industry. Information already prepared for the Regional Agricultural Plan could be incorporated into the brochure and the same information could also be used on the PRRD website.

Numerous municipalities in BC have helped citizens better understand agriculture by providing tours that often feature progressive agricultural businesses. Such tours are already operating in parts of the PRRD. The press, local politicians, and other interested people may be invited to participate. A meal may be served during or after the tour, possibly featuring available local agricultural products. The tour encourages agricultural awareness by providing agricultural information to citizens through the local press and other information sources.

Promoting other agricultural events such as agricultural fairs may also support agriculture and demonstrate the Regional District's welcoming business environment for agriculture. Supporting programs like the BC Agriculture in the Classroom program also demonstrates a welcoming business environment for agriculture.

Some municipalities have gained support for agriculture by providing signs identifying field crops and other agricultural activities so the traveling public becomes more familiar with crops being grown and agricultural activities underway.

Although moving large equipment safely from agricultural operation to agricultural operation is the responsibility of the producer and equipment must have appropriate lighting, braking and steering to meet safety standards, signs to encourage motorists to be aware of, and show respect for, slower moving agricultural equipment will promote the presence of agriculture and demonstrate a welcoming business environment for agriculture.

#### Objective:

To promote the role of agriculture to citizens and others.

Policies (Partners):	Implementation:
<p>The PRRD will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Support the agricultural industry as an important economic contributor to the Regional District economy (AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)</li> <li>✓ Encourage citizens to learn about the role and importance of agriculture (AAC, agricultural community)</li> <li>✓ Support the BC Agriculture in the Classroom program as a way to further knowledge about agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor agricultural production in the PRRD</li> <li>• Regularly promote initiatives which support the economic contribution made by agriculture</li> <li>• Promote agricultural fairs and other agricultural events in the PRRD</li> <li>• Feature selected agriculture events on PRRD website</li> <li>• Review all schools in the Regional District to determine presence of the AITC program</li> </ul>

- ✓ Support existing and developing agricultural tours in the three sub regions organized by local agricultural communities and other partners as appropriate (AAC, Local communities)

- Encourage all schools to participate in the AITC program
- Notify local communities of existing tour options
- Encourage Regional Board participation in the tours
- Encourage media coverage of the tour
- Encourage producers and others to participate in tours in other sub-regions

#### Actions (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Prepare a brochure, suitable for distribution to PRRD citizens and new arrivals to the Regional District, outlining the role and importance of agriculture, including information about normal farm practices resulting from a productive industry (AAC, BCMA, IAF, agricultural community)
- ✓ Evaluate idea of producers placing appropriate signs in well-travelled areas of the PRRD indicating crops grown or other agricultural activities present (AAC, agricultural community)
- ✓ Review areas of the PRRD where large agricultural equipment is moved regularly and provide signs to make motorists aware of slower moving agricultural equipment

#### Implementation:

- Review requirements
- Work with BCMA for information regarding normal farm practices
- See sample of a brochure, "Embracing a Farm Community" available in Chilliwack
- Prepare brochure using PRRD examples and graphics
- Distribute brochure through appropriate channels
- Make brochure available in electronic format for posting to the PRRD website
- Review with agricultural community
- Establish Committee as required
- Consider a pilot project in one of the sub-regions such as North Peace
- Design a common format for the signs
- Make brochure available in electronic format for posting to the PRRD website
- Review travel patterns
- Seek input from the agricultural community
- Erect signs as appropriate
- Provide seasonal advertising reminders to watch for agricultural equipment on roads
- Include information about moving large equipment in "emergency preparedness" brochures



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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Undertake a study on the economic impact of agriculture based on the model used for the recently completed study in the City of Abbotsford (BCMA, IAF, AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint appropriate Committee</li> <li>• Develop Terms of Reference for an agricultural economic impact study</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

#### Resources:

The cost of implementing the action items will include staff time to be identified in future line department budgets. Based on similar work done in Delta, crop identification signs are estimated at \$150 per sign, excluding installation, and more detailed costs would be projected should the evaluation of the crop identification option be supported. Cost for the PRRD share of a brochure on the role and importance of agriculture is estimated at \$7,000; cost for an economic impact study is estimated at \$12,000.

### 2.1.8 Plan for Crises and Disasters

The capacity to address crises and disasters supports the provision of a welcoming business environment for agriculture.

#### Discussion:

Crises and disasters such as unusual storm events or flooding are generally addressed at the provincial or federal government level. Disasters affecting the Regional District, such as localized flooding, water contamination, or other local calamities, may be addressed by the Regional District. The Regional District has already been active with a climate change initiative and has considered an animal mass carcass disposal emergency plan. The PRRD has prepared a Waste Management Plan and will develop a Water Management Strategy.

The *Provincial Emergency Program* is a division of the Ministry of Justice, Emergency Management BC. It works with local governments to provide training and support before, during, and after emergencies. There are six regional offices in the province with one in Prince George to work with the Peace River Regional District. Emergencies affecting agriculture may also be addressed by the BC Ministry of Agriculture (with a regional office in Fort St John) or the BC Ministry of the Environment (also with a regional office in Fort St John). Agricultural crises may also involve agricultural commodity associations and agencies. Section 2(1) of the *BC Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation –1995* requires local authorities to prepare emergency plans.

#### Objective:

To ensure potential agricultural crises and disasters are addressed in the emergency response plans within the Regional District.

## Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support working with all relevant government agencies and agricultural groups and associations to address crises and disasters affecting the agricultural community (BCMA, PEP, agricultural community, commodity associations)
- ✓ Support emergency planning at the PRRD level to identify relevant and potential agricultural emergencies such as flooding, other storm related issues, livestock issues and others (AAC, BCMA, PEP, agricultural community)

## Implementation:

- Identify relevant partners and organizations
- Ensure agricultural input to emergency planning
- Participate in emergency planning for agriculture
- Identify relevant and potential agricultural issues that may lead to emergency situations

## Resources:

Implementation will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets.

### 2.1.9 Establish Good Neighbour Policy

The Peace River Regional District is committed to fostering community good will and encouraging positive relationships among all citizens in the context of creating a welcoming business environment for agricultural development.

## Discussion:

Occasionally there will be conflict between agricultural producers and neighbours concerned about normal farm practices on area operations. A good neighbour policy can support positive relationships among producers and their neighbours.

Although protected by the *Farm Practices Protection Act* against nuisance complaints and lawsuits, producers do not want to be in conflict with their neighbours, or with other citizens in general. Producers, when following appropriate management practices, must be allowed to operate their businesses in a manner that provides for their livelihood.

## Objective:

To reduce incidents of conflict between agricultural producers and other citizens.

## Policy (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Encourage positive relationships among all citizens (AAC, citizens)

## Implementation:

- Promote the “good neighbour” policy developed below
- Review the merits of programs, in cooperation with the RCMP, and related to being good neighbours such as Citizens on Patrol Program and Rural Crime Watch Program

## Action (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Prepare a “good neighbour” policy to encourage goodwill, respect for all opinions, and the spirit of being good neighbours among all citizens when addressing issues of conflict (AAC, citizens)

Under this policy, *producers* will be encouraged to:

- get to know their neighbours and share information about their production practices where possible
- support management practices that enhance quality of life, attention to welfare of livestock and sensitivity to the environment
- reduce dust, noise, and odour where reasonable
- consider visual screening or hedging where practical and affordable
- allow normal vehicle traffic to pass, where possible, when travelling busy roads with large equipment and tractors

*Neighbours and all citizens* will be encouraged to:

- understand “normal farm practices” and other best management practices on agricultural operations
- support producers’ need to operate their businesses in an economically sustainable manner
- appreciate the contributions of area agriculture to local food supplies and food security

## Implementation:

- Develop a good neighbour policy with responsibility for actions by both the agricultural producer and other citizens
- Incorporate “good neighbour” policy into the agricultural brochure (see 2.1.5) and add to PRRD website
- Determine appropriate other venues for information about the policy and distribution of the brochure

- eliminate unauthorized trespass on area agricultural operations and relevant range areas
- report all incidences of dumping of waste and garbage on area agricultural operations and relevant range areas
- report observed incidences of vandalism and theft from agricultural businesses, processing sites and relevant range areas
- yield to agricultural equipment and other large vehicles accessing area agricultural operations.

#### Resources:

Implementation of policy and action items will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets. It is anticipated the preparation and promotion of the good neighbour policy will be included in an appropriate line department budget.

## 2.2 ENCOURAGING NECESSARY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing for sufficient water for agriculture and addressing issues related to road usage and maintenance are examples of services and infrastructure that contribute to agricultural production. Agricultural economic development may be enhanced by an increased level of processing and value-added activity in the PRRD.

The purpose of this strategy area is to ensure that relevant services and infrastructure are developed and maintained to encourage local agriculture.

### 2.2.1 Provide a Water Strategy for Agriculture

Back dropped by the introduction of the new Water Sustainability Act and concerns about water for agriculture as identified in a recent workshop in Fort St John<sup>4</sup>, development of a water use strategy for agriculture is considered to be a priority to be addressed by the Regional Agricultural Plan.

#### Discussion:

Water is an essential requirement for agriculture for the growing of crops and management of livestock. The industry is extremely vulnerable to drought.

In the recently completed pilot project in the PRRD from the Climate Action Initiative, a priority issue for agriculture was “increasingly dry conditions and lower water supply in summer and fall”. The Climate Action Initiative, addressing water issues, identified the need for a Regional Water Collaborative to address water issues, the need to evaluate, map and monitor water resources, the

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<sup>4</sup> Fraser Basin Council, Workshop on Water Issues in BC’s Peace Region, Fort St John, May 30, 2013

need to enhance development of water storage, the need to evaluate the potential for additional water supply infrastructure for agriculture and the need to undertake drought resilience planning.

Because agriculture contributes to the social and economic well-being of British Columbia, having adequate water supplies for agriculture has been identified as a provincial priority. However, efficient water use is a requirement for any assurances of future water availability. It is anticipated that in the near future the provincial government will require all large water users to measure and report their water use.

The BC Water Sustainability Act, currently receiving further public input, will replace the BC Water Act which has been in effect since 1909 and is understood to no longer address current water issues adequately, such as groundwater use. The BC Water Sustainability Act is expected to:

- Protect stream health and aquatic environments
- Consider water in land use decisions
- Regulate and protect groundwater
- Regulate water use during times of scarcity
- Improve security, water use efficiency and conservation
- Measure and report large-scale water use
- Provide for a range of governance approaches.

On May 30, 2013, the Fraser Basin Council hosted a full-day workshop engaging water stewards, practitioners, and other relevant interests from the Peace River region and beyond. Seventy participants representing non-government organizations as well as local, provincial and First Nations governments, industry, the private sector and interested citizens attended.

The Peace River Regional District is involved with water because of its role in the development of water sources such as deep wells and springs as well as management of land use in unincorporated areas of the PRRD. The PRRD is an advocate for water quantity and quality and has provided input to the new Water Sustainability Act. The PRRD has also provided funds for completion of watershed studies.

The PRRD is concerned about a fragmented approach to water management with no single group taking the full range of issues into account. There is little knowledge, or management, of underwater aquifers and little knowledge about the impact of industry on these aquifers. The PRRD is also concerned about the extensive use of potable water for industrial purposes and the potential impact of that use on water relied upon by citizens.

The little knowledge about ground water use in the PRRD is typical of the limited knowledge about groundwater throughout the Province. In the PRRD, there is a need for initial mapping of the aquifers or groundwater sources. There is a need to identify the extent of water use by agriculture. It is the intent of the new Water Sustainability Act to regulate groundwater in BC. Currently, there is no data to provide detailed information about water use by agriculture in the PRRD.

Additional regulation is a concern for agricultural producers but many recognize the need to conserve and protect water supplies and sources for agriculture. Access to a supply of clean water is a priority for agriculture and one of the priority concerns identified at the Fraser Basin Council workshop was contamination of water by industry. There are also concerns about conflict between water users.

Most agricultural producers have attempted to assure their own supply of water using wells but some also rely on water provided through the resources of the PRRD. Although irrigation is not a common practice in the PRRD, there may be merit for the future in considering irrigation for some crops to stabilize or increase yield. The use of water through irrigation may extend the range of crops grown, particularly should temperatures rise in the PRRD due to present trends related to climate change.

#### Objective:

To develop a water use strategy for agriculture for the Peace River Regional District.

#### Policies (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Advocate for, and encourage, water stewardship, water conservation efforts and secure water supply for food production and human animal husbandry in the PRRD

#### Implementation:

- Develop suggestions and ideas for further water stewardship and conservation including programs for additional water storage for agricultural purposes
- Promote, and provide information about, water stewardship and water conservation to PRRD citizens in cooperation with local governments and the Regional Board

#### Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Develop a Regional District resource base to increase knowledge of water issues and water management

#### Implementation:

- Collect and post to the PRRD website resources and information available from other jurisdiction such as the 2009 publication, *The Sustainable Management of Groundwater in Canada*
- Collect and post PRRD resources such as the report from the *Kiskatinaw River Watershed Research Project* and *Proceedings of the former Peace River Watershed Council*
- Identify the importance of unimpeded drainage and riparian areas to downstream water supply

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Support and encourage development of area water committees on an “as needed” basis to review and identify water issues including reviewing and addressing water issues for agriculture in the shorter term</li> <br/> <li>✓ Initiate a pilot project with agricultural producers willing to participate to identify baseline data on water use by agriculture (AAC, Sub-region Water Committees, cooperating producers, IAF)</li> <br/> <li>✓ Develop a Water Use Strategy for Agriculture in cooperation with other industries and citizens of the PRRD (AAC, BCMA, GeoScience BC and others)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek interested participants by reviewing and contacting those who were part of the Fraser Basin Council workshop in May, 2013</li> <li>• Provide start-up funding to encourage development of water committees and to support attendance at meetings</li> <li>• Regularly receive reports from the committees</li> <li>• Evaluate the merits of various water committees after three years of operation</li> <br/> <li>• Committee of AAC to develop terms of reference for the pilot project</li> <li>• Seek cooperating producers</li> <li>• Obtain funding from available sources such as the Investment Agriculture Foundation</li> <br/> <li>• To be done in the longer term, identify selected processes and strategies needed to develop the overall strategy</li> <li>• Work closely with all other groups interested and involved in water issues</li> <li>• Seek input from other industry groups, agencies and organizations</li> </ul> |
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#### Resources:

The cost of implementing the policy and action items will include staff and Committee time as identified in future line department budgets. Funding related to water committees is estimated at \$18,000 annually to provide for at least three meetings in each sub-region. The PRRD share of a pilot project study with cooperating agricultural producers is estimated at \$25,000. Development of the Water Use Strategy for agriculture will be done in the longer term and no budget estimates can be properly made at this time.

### 2.2.2 Address Road and Traffic Issues

Roads are an important infrastructure component in the PRRD. The PRRD does not have jurisdiction over roads in the Regional District but has been influential in advocating for road upgrades in the PRRD.

The Rural Roads Task Force for the Peace, sponsored by the PRRD and established in 2003, is an example of ways that the PRRD can assist with road development despite limits on jurisdiction. The Task Force was established to address road issues, identified at the time, such as:

- 78% of rural roads in the Peace are gravel, not built for heavier vehicles and high volumes of traffic
- The extent of road bans in the Spring was increasing
- Roads do not have adequate width to accommodate larger equipment
- Many roads needed upgrading and increased maintenance.

The Task Force was successful to the extent that many improvements were made to the roads using additional funds provided by the province.

During the consultation phase in the development of the Regional Agricultural Plan, stakeholders continued to identify road issues, suggesting inadequate road infrastructure may be hindering their ability to compete with other jurisdictions. The current heavy use of rural roads by the oil and gas sector is having an impact upon agricultural use of the same roads, creating a need for increased maintenance and upgrading.

Agricultural producers require adequate roads to:

- move between areas of their operations as many parcels are not contiguous
- bring necessary inputs such as seed, fertilizer and livestock to the business
- move products to market
- in some cases bring customers to local markets on production units.

Objective:

To advocate for appropriate road infrastructure for the PRRD.

Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support the needs of all stakeholders, including the agricultural sector, and advocate, where possible for improvements to road infrastructure (AAC)

Implementation:

- Include AAC representation on any Road and Transportation committees that may be established
- Request AAC comment in the planning of new roads or future road improvements on existing roads in the rural area or the overall road network



#### Actions (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Review PRRD road infrastructure to identify shortcomings in the context of growing road demand (AAC, Agricultural community)

#### Implementation:

- Develop terms of reference for a review of road infrastructure
- Request AAC involvement
- Further identify and list traffic issues faced by the agricultural community and other industry sectors and citizens
- Report to Regional Board

#### Resources:

Implementation will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets.

### 2.2.3 Encourage Local Processing Facilities

Encouraging more processing facilities, including processing that may occur on agricultural operations, will support further agricultural development.

#### Discussion:

Food processing facilities will expand markets for area producers thus increasing local agricultural economic activity. Some processing already occurs on local operations in the Regional District, mainly through smaller slaughter and processing facilities. The PRRD may be a desirable location for some food processors because of the high volume of cattle in the region and the highly productive crop lands.

Food processing is recognized as a potential growth industry that can become an important economic driver. In Ontario, the food and beverage industry is expecting considerable growth in the next five years with ambitious forecasting that suggests the industry may replace the automotive sector in terms of providing jobs in the province.<sup>5</sup>

Food processing on agricultural operations is supported by the Agricultural Land Commission. Although currently there is a requirement by the ALC Regulations that 50% of the processed product must originate where the processing unit is located, this rigid requirement may be addressed by the ALC to provide producers more flexibility to support their operations.

Local processing that relies on local sales may be disadvantaged due to relatively small market size in the PRRD. Local processing that relies on external markets may also be disadvantaged by higher transportation costs.

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<sup>5</sup> Susan Mann, "Food Processing Poised to Become Ontario's Top Industry" in *Better Farming*, October 29, 2013.

Cooperation and increased liaison between the agricultural industry and the North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions should be encouraged and supported. The North Peace EDC played a role in the purchase and operation of a Fort St John grain elevator. It is expected additional liaison with the EDC's could result in improved economic opportunities for the ranching sector. Cattle numbers are declining in the PRRD at this time but the Regional District does contain about ¼ of all cattle in BC. Currently the cattle industry is being challenged by shrinking markets and limited processing, particularly processing that allows local cattle to be exported to growing markets elsewhere. Some additional marketing opportunities may occur for the cattle sector should discussions related to more foreign trade agreements materialize from discussion into active agreements. There may be merit in greater levels of cooperation between cattle producers and local processing capacity among the Hutterite community near Fort St John.

#### Objective:

To increase economic development of the agricultural industry by encouraging local food processing.

#### Policies (Partners):

##### The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support food processing on area production units when consistent with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Regulations (AAC, ALC)
- ✓ Support efforts to attract food processors to the PRRD and work with interested processors to provide infrastructure needs where possible (PRRD Staff, EDCs)

#### Implementation:

- Review bylaws and regulations to ensure consistency with ALC regulations
- Amend regulations if required
- Negotiate with the ALC to encourage regulations that strengthen agriculture in the PRRD
- Promote processing options to area producers
- Work with regulating agencies to facilitate establishment of more local processing
- Recognize importance of food processing to overall agricultural expansion
- Work with cattle industry representatives to support efforts for local processing
- Document infrastructure needs of larger-scale food processing industries
- Review existing infrastructure against the needs of larger-scale food processing industries

## Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Ensure that the development of the agricultural industry is considered by the Economic Development Commissions and other appropriate agencies and groups in the PRRD (AAC, NPEDC, SPEDC)

## Implementation:

- Upon completion, arrange to present the Regional Agricultural Plan to the Economic Development Commissions
- Consider meetings and ongoing liaison between the AAC and the Economic Development Commissions and/or other groups or agencies where possible

## Resources:

Implementation of these policy and action items will require staff and committee time to be included in future line budgets. Additional budget may be required to support processing initiatives but any possible infrastructure costs cannot be estimated at this time.

### 2.2.4 Encourage Local Purchasing of Agricultural Products

Increasing the purchase of local agricultural products in local markets can open up new markets for agricultural producers and increase economic activity within the Regional District.

## Discussion:

There is a growing interest in British Columbia for purchasing locally-produced agricultural products. Anecdotal information obtained during the consultation process for the Regional Agricultural Plan suggested that the provincial trend to purchasing increasing amounts of locally grown agricultural products is occurring in the Peace River Regional District.

Increasing the purchase of local agricultural products in local markets will benefit producers financially; keep money within the local economy; provide the local population with access to fresh, healthy food and other processed agricultural products; and meet the goals of the PRRD to encourage sustainable agriculture by reducing the distance food travels from the source to the consumer.

While some local products are already being purchased within the Regional District, knowledge about those sales is limited. Information is lacking with respect to the quantity of product being sold and its dollar value. As well, there are few resources and programs to support the sourcing and purchasing of local food in local markets.

Increasing opportunities for direct marketing of local foods - including farmers' markets, sales directly from the source of production, and community supported agriculture (CSAs) - may contribute to increasing sales of local products within the Regional District. Policy additions to support the development of direct marketing activities, including on-site activities such as processing and sales and sales of food at temporary markets (including farmers' markets) are important for increasing local

sales. Some studies and surveys have identified the importance of local government support for encouraging entrepreneurs to invest their own resources in the establishment and expansion of local businesses.<sup>6</sup>

Compiling a directory of local agricultural products will facilitate the purchase of local food in the Regional District. This may include supporting a variety of online and print resources detailing the availability of local agricultural products and the channels by which purchasers may access local products directly. This type of information would help consumers, chefs, institutional purchasers and retailers to access local agricultural products whether through direct sales, u-pick opportunities, community-supported agriculture opportunities, or farmers' markets.

Existing (and perhaps new) farmers' markets can play an important role in facilitating and increasing the purchase of local food within local markets. The benefits of farmers' markets as a marketing channel include: higher financial returns for producers, no middleman, greater control for producers, community building, direct connection between consumers and producers, and low cost exposure for products and businesses.

There are currently three farmers' markets operating within the PRRD including Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, and Fort St. John. Greater support for existing and new farmers' markets may be appropriate. This could include local government policy support, signage, access to permanent visible locations, marketing support, access to water, public washrooms, electricity and parking.

Including local foods in the purchasing policies of larger public institutions in the PRRD including schools, post-secondary institutions, municipal halls, hospitals, and community health centres can increase demand and purchasing of local agricultural products within the region. Such arrangements have the potential to provide secure markets for a variety of local producers. Local food purchasing policies must abide by various trade agreements including NAFTA and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA). Resources that detail possible challenges and successful examples of local food purchasing policies in public institutions are available.

Increasing opportunities for agricultural producers, processors, distributors, chefs and retailers to network and build relationships may encourage the development of important value chains (value chains provide for involvement of more local people in getting products from the production source to the consumer) and lead to increased purchasing of local agricultural products within the region. Opportunities for collaboration include: ranchers purchasing more feed from local hay or grain producers, chefs incorporating and highlighting local produce on their menus, and local grocers working with producers to create a "local agricultural products" section at the grocery store.

The development of a regional body, such as a regional food policy council or direct marketing association to facilitate and increase the local purchase of food within the region should be encouraged. Increased cooperation with Community Futures Peace Liard and the North and South

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<sup>6</sup> Canadian Federation of Independent Business, *Communities in Boom*, 2013.

Peace Economic Development Commissions may play an important role in reaching this goal by providing ongoing and relevant programming.

Objective:

To encourage new markets for agricultural producers by increasing the purchase of local agricultural products in local markets.

Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support direct marketing opportunities for area producers (AAC, BCAFM, BCMA)

Implementation:

- Review and amend bylaws, zoning, business licenses and regulations, where required, to ensure they support direct marketing opportunities for local food, including processing and sales, agri-tourism, and farmers' markets
- Encourage local governments to support existing (and new farmers' markets when appropriate) by providing appropriate permits, signage, access to permanent visible locations, marketing support, access to water, public washrooms, electricity, and parking.
- Review and promote the best practices with the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM)
- Raise awareness of local products for sale through website and other communication methods.

Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Encourage the development of a local food council or agricultural direct marketing association (AAC, CFPL, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions)

Implementation:

- Review development of similar organizations and associations in other parts of BC such as FARMED (North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association), Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association and Southern Vancouver Island Farm Direct Marketing Association
- Provide initial resources to encourage the agricultural community to discuss possibility of creating a food council or local direct marketing association
- Consider collaborating with Community Futures Peace Liard, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions and/or other groups to run programming to support increased purchasing of local foods within the region.

- ✓ Encourage the development of local food purchasing policies in large public institutions in the PRRD (AAC, PHABC)
  - Review examples of local food purchasing policies that are occurring in other jurisdictions. The Public Health Association of BC (PHABC) has documented some successful examples and potential barriers
  - Further assess the merits of such a policy with the AAC and EDCs
  - Encourage local associations and producer organizations or associations, such as the ones suggested above, to discuss opportunities and barriers with large public institutions located within the PRRD
  - Explore further resources that may aid local governments and other public institutions with food purchasing decisions
  - Ensure compliance of institutional purchasing policies with various trade agreements including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA)

#### Resources:

Implementation of these policy or action items will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets. Additional budgeting may be required to support the agricultural community with creating a food council or a direct marketing association.



## 2.3 SUPPORTING A SECURE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE

Supporting a secure agricultural land base is consistent with the Regional District's efforts to attract agricultural development that can lead to increasing levels of agricultural production.

The purpose of this strategy area is to secure the existing agricultural land base. Securing the land base will encourage potential producers to assume the risks associated with agricultural development and expansion.

### 2.3.1 Protect Agricultural Land for Agricultural Purposes

Land zoned specifically for agriculture is generally contained within the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve. Land within the Agricultural Land Reserve is regulated and protected by the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. The PRRD has 11% of its land base within the ALR. Some land in the PRRD that lies outside of the ALR is also used for agriculture. Land used for agriculture that is not contained within the ALR, or contained within appropriate agricultural zoning in the PRRD Official Community Plan for rural areas, is not protected by the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* or the *Farm Practices Protection Act*.

#### Discussion:

The province of British Columbia, with much of it covered by mountains, has a limited amount of potentially productive agricultural land (estimated at less than 5% of the entire land base in the province). Most agricultural land in the province is located in the Agricultural Land Reserve and protected for agricultural uses by the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. Protection of agricultural land supports present and future agricultural production by maintaining the land base for agriculture. PRRD agricultural land in the ALR is clustered in the east/central part of the Regional District and around the areas where the largest number of people are living, namely in the communities of Fort St John, Dawson Creek, and other smaller, but often urban-oriented, communities.

There is considerable support for agriculture identified in PRRD planning documents. In the *Rural Official Community Plan*, for example, numerous goals related to agriculture are identified including:

- land use that is supportive of the agricultural community and its industry
- protection of the rural lifestyle which provides residents with rural characteristics such as peace, privacy, friendliness, access to community facilities, the enjoyment of open space, and the quiet enjoyment of the land – all of which contribute to a desirable rural way-of-life
- effective provision of local and regional government services to the rural area
- a supportive and respectful relationship with provincial government ministries and agencies
- economic opportunities that benefit residents and land-owners
- recognition of surface and ground water sources as critical, life-sustaining resources and use of best practices in preserving, restoring, and protecting watershed areas
- protection of development from hazardous environmental features
- provision of outdoor recreation opportunities

- living sustainably with the natural environment
- promotion and protection of valued historical and cultural features
- achieving reductions in targets for greenhouse gas emissions.

During the consultation phase in the development of the Regional Agricultural Plan, some people expressed frustration with the Agricultural Land Commission because of its apparent slow process for decision-making and its apparent unwillingness to support selected sub-division and other applications for land exclusion from the ALR. It is anticipated that future adjustments to management of the province's ALR will increase the level of local decision-making on selected sub-division applications.

Larger parcels of agricultural land provide for a greater number of options for agricultural production but much of BC's agricultural land is held in relatively small parcels. However, agricultural operations are substantially larger in the PRRD than in other parts of BC. In 2011, for example, the average farm size in the PRRD was more than 530 hectares. In comparison, the average farm size for the province as a whole is about 130 hectares. Regardless, sub-division of agricultural land may be problematic because once land has been sub-divided, it is generally more difficult to consolidate it back into larger, more agriculturally-viable parcels. Smaller parcels may be more likely to encourage non-agricultural uses.

Applications may be made under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* to exclude land from the ALR, use land for non-agricultural purposes or subdivide land in the ALR. Many local governments with Agricultural Advisory Committees, as a matter of policy, refer all applications of this type to their AAC to obtain advice about the implications of sub-division for agriculture. Most Agricultural Advisory Committees are composed of people who understand agricultural production and support the use of agricultural land for agricultural purposes.

The Agricultural Land Commission requires that all applications for exclusion be received first by the local government, which is not required to forward them to the ALC if the local government does not support the application. Local government comments on applications for sub-division or removal of land from the ALR provide valuable information for the possible eventual consideration of the Agricultural Land Commission. The Agricultural Land Commission may also consider additional local control over sub-division through appropriate delegation agreements.

It is not the current practice of the PRRD to have applications for sub-division or removal reviewed by the Agricultural Advisory Committee with recommendations provided to the Regional Board.

The PRRD has considerable land abutting the Agricultural Land Reserve that is dedicated to urban and industrial uses, especially around the communities of Fort St John and Dawson Creek. As well, within the ALR, there are parcels that are not currently being used for agricultural production. Intrusions into agricultural land, particularly in areas where there is substantial urban development, may occur from time to time and have an effect on the boundary of the Agricultural Land Reserve. West of Charlie Lake, for example, there appears to be considerable residential subdivision both within and



outside of the ALR. The Agricultural Land Commission will generally support a boundary review study if suggested by the local government.

The Agricultural Land Reserve was established in the 1970's. Since then, communities in the PRRD have experienced considerable growth and further economic opportunities in agriculture as well as other industries. It is important for the Regional District to address all land uses and the impact of existing and future land uses in the ALR.

At the interface, where agricultural use may be directly adjacent to non-agricultural uses, conflict may occur. Sometimes conflict may relate to complaints about noise, dust, or odour from agricultural operations. Complaints may also come from producers concerned about the impact of urban development on their agricultural operations. Producers may also experience trespass, vandalism, crop damage, livestock harassment, and littering.

Agricultural producers who may have an agricultural operation on land that is not within the Agricultural Land Reserve yet still appropriately zoned for agriculture within existing PRRD official documents, may apply for inclusion in the ALR if it is considered advantageous for increasing protection for agricultural land and production practices. The PRRD will support applications from producers wishing to move non-ALR land into the ALR.

**Objective:**

To protect agricultural land for agricultural purposes in the PRRD.

**Policies (Partners):**

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support the protection of agricultural land, both within and outside of the ALR, for agricultural purposes (AAC, BCMA, ALC)
  
- ✓ Seek advice from the Agricultural Advisory Committee for applications received by the PRRD for removal, boundary adjustment, sub-division or non-agricultural use on land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (AAC)

**Implementation:**

- Ensure policies in official documents and relevant Official Community Plans continue to support protection of agricultural land for agricultural purposes
- Support applications by agricultural producers to include non-ALR land into the ALR
  
- Develop protocols for application referral to the AAC with the intent of demonstrating if the application will support or benefit agriculture
- Refer ALR applications to the AAC, with staff to provide necessary available information for the AAC review

- ✓ Support strategies for edge planning in higher urban-populated areas of the PRRD where the Agricultural Land Reserve abuts non-ALR land (AAC, BCMA, ALC)

- Identify areas at the interface of urban/rural uses where conflict may occur
- Remind landowners and developers about agricultural uses and Farm Practices Protection Act
- Prepare information about appropriate edge planning techniques and standards
- Provide information to affected agricultural land owners and local governments
- Encourage local governments to follow through with agreements on buffer zones

#### Actions (Partners):

#### Implementation:

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Prepare an agricultural impact guideline for use by the AAC to help address ways that an application for exclusion, non-agricultural use or subdivision will support or be of benefit to agriculture. The assessment process may consider the following:
  - type of application whether for removal or boundary adjustment or non-agricultural use or subdivision identified on agricultural land
  - size of the parcel in question
  - location of the parcel
  - impact on the ALR boundary and adjacent agricultural parcels
  - assessment of how the proposal will support or be of benefit to agriculture
  - assessment of possible options for the proposed use that could be undertaken on non-agricultural land
  - assessment the agricultural capability and suitability of the parcel
  - assessment of the present and adjacent land use
- Refine and enhance the specific criteria to be considered for an agricultural impact guideline in consultation with the AAC
- Ensure applicant for sub-division or removal bears any cost of conducting an agricultural impact review, if relevant
- Refer the results of the completed agricultural impact review to Regional Board with appropriate recommendations

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessment of whether the application will result in additional pressure for further applications or increase the expectation for further applications</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop general guidelines for the boundary review</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Initiate, in cooperation with the Agricultural Land Commission and larger municipalities in the PRRD, a boundary review study of the ALR with particular emphasis on areas where the ALR boundary abuts urban development (AAC,ALC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the merits of a boundary review study with Regional Board</li> <li>• Initiate discussions on the merits of the study with the Agricultural Land Commission</li> </ul> |

#### Resources:

Implementation will require staff and committee time to be included in future line budgets. The PRRD share of a project to refine the guidelines for agricultural impact of removal or sub-division is estimated at \$5,000. Any cost associated with a boundary review will be contained within existing operating budgets.

### 2.3.2 Support Agricultural Access to Available Crown Land

The use of Crown Land by producers will enhance agriculture and contribute to the productivity of the agricultural land base in the Peace River Regional District. Crown land assigned for agricultural purposes may be protected by the *Farm Practices Protection Act*.

#### Discussion:

Considerable BC Crown Land is suitable for agriculture but is excluded from the Agricultural Land Reserve, thus eliminating its use for agriculture and encouraging non-agricultural uses. Crown Land can be accessed for agricultural (and other uses) by direct sales and leases or licenses.

Direct sale of Crown land to producers is the easiest way for them to access Crown Land. Presently (as of October 7, 2013) there are eleven applications for the sale of Crown Land for agricultural use in the Peace River Regional District. The sale of Crown Land for agriculture is not actively marketed. Most Crown Land that is sold is used for hay production. Only established producers, presently utilizing over 80% of their existing holdings for agriculture, are eligible to purchase Crown Land.

Existing agricultural leases may be renewed, but no new leases are being offered. The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is responsible for issuing grazing licenses. Due to limited staff resources in the Ministry, no licenses have been issued since 2010.<sup>7</sup>

Grazing leases have been awarded to beef, sheep and horse operations. At this time it is estimated that about 25,000 animals are grazed on Crown Land in the Peace River Regional District.

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<sup>7</sup> Conversation with Ministry of Forests, Land and Natural Resource Operations, October 7, 2013

Currently, there are 50 applications for additional grazing licenses waiting to be processed.<sup>8</sup>  
The current moratorium on issuing Crown land licenses is a constraint to the expansion of some agricultural operations.

#### Objective:

To encourage Crown Land be available for direct sales and lease or license to the agricultural community.

#### Policy (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support producers seeking access to Crown Land for agricultural uses (PRRD, AAC, other agricultural organizations, Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Agricultural Land Commission)

#### Implementation

- Work with appropriate stakeholders, and using available maps in the PRRD, determine Crown land that would be most appropriately used for agricultural purposes
- Partner with producer associations where appropriate to clarify specific issues restricting producer access to Crown land
- Support including Crown Land used for agriculture in the Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the Agricultural Land Reserve, where appropriate
- Encourage the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to process applications for grazing licences in the Peace River Regional District
- Encourage the M of FLNRO and the ALC to determine appropriate criteria for the direct sale of Crown lands to producers

#### Resources:

Implementation of this policy item will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets. Additional budget may be required to support this initiative, particularly with the development of maps and other liaison with identified partners.

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<sup>8</sup> Conversation with Ministry of Forests, Land and Natural Resource Operations, October 7, 2013

## 2.4 SUPPORTING PROGRESSIVE PRODUCER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Some progressive producer practices may be essential to ensure the longer term sustainability of the agricultural industry in the PRRD. Some practices may enhance agriculture in the context of competition with other land uses.

Although there is generally positive support for agriculture in the PRRD, producers must continue to manage their operations in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of other citizens and sensitive to the environment. By doing so, support for additional agricultural development can continue.

The purpose of this strategy area is to identify producer practices that will enhance agriculture and maintain the industry's positive support in the Peace River Regional District.

### 2.4.1 Encourage Research and Extension

Agricultural research and extension programs support producers' ability to expand and grow the agricultural industry in the Regional District.

#### Discussion:

Increasing agricultural research and extension programs will assist agricultural producers to remain competitive and current on production practices. Some research and extension services are already available in the Regional District through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and provincial and regional producer associations.

The Beaverlodge Research Farm, operated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Beaverlodge, Alberta provides research on soil microbiology and biodiversity, soil fertility, soil physics and management, integrating cropping systems, plant pathology, canola breeding, entomology, forage seeds and grass production. As Canada's most northerly Agricultural Research Station, Beaverlodge contributes unique and important research on crops suited to growing conditions in the PRRD.

Agricultural extension services provided by the BC Ministry of Agriculture have shifted emphasis over the last several decades, moving away from the historic model of Ministry extension officers being directly involved with helping individual producers with their businesses. Current extension activities offered by the Ministry tend to be more industry-specific and program-based and include broader industry topics such as food safety, risk management and business planning. Work has also been done by the Ministry to produce industry specific fact sheets and publications designed to help producers to help themselves.

The BC Ministry of Agriculture also operates the Regional Agrologist Network, which delivers selected services mainly through two regions in BC, Interior and Coast. The Network provides, among others, the following:

- Specialized knowledge and expertise in agrology to foster resource development and environmental sustainability

- Resolution of conflicts between agriculture and other interests in land, air and water
- Advice and leadership in issues management, policy development and planning
- Fostering of agri-food economic development opportunities.

Although many producers have adjusted to the reduced level of public-funded extension services, during the consultation process some producers expressed concern about the reduction. Some additional services as identified within the Regional Agrologist Network may be useful in the PRRD.

More forums where producers can share ideas about agriculture may encourage broader agricultural knowledge among producers. Such forums can facilitate sharing of best practices, innovative solutions and improved technological applications. The PRRD Agricultural Advisory Committee may support this work by providing meeting space and other resources when possible. Other options for greater producer interaction may include producer training sessions, live interactive webinars, conventions and conferences and regular consultation meetings.

The BC Ministry of Agriculture also maintains the AgriFoodBC InfoBasket, an online database of industry specific resources. Provincial and regional producer associations also offer industry specific online resources. Some producers in the PRRD do not have appropriate high-speed internet access to facilitate the use of these resources.

Accessible, relevant research is important for maintaining a thriving and competitive agricultural industry. Fostering the development of relationships between producers and producer groups with academic institutions encourage research on topics that are most important to agriculture in the PRRD. The University of Northern BC provides industry liaison services including facilitating interactions between groups of researchers and specific sectors of the non-academic world. Other potential education partners include, the BC Innovation Council, University of British Columbia, University of the Fraser Valley and University of Alberta.

Leadership development programs can play an important role in maintaining a vibrant agricultural sector. Leadership programs may address a variety of topics including motivation, change management, and effective communication. Agricultural leaders gain skills to address critical issues faced by producers in the Region. B.C. 4-H has been providing leadership development activities for youth in agricultural communities since 1914. Supporting the B.C. 4-H Program will encourage further development of young leaders in the agricultural community.

There may be merit from greater involvement of the PRRD agricultural community with other leadership programs for adults, many of them available specifically for agricultural producers. The Canadian Farm Business Management Council and the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council offer helpful resources on this subject.

Objective:

To increase the viability and growth of the agricultural industry in the Regional District by encouraging agricultural research and extension programs.

## Policies(Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Encourage Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue providing research and extension services through Lacombe and Beaverlodge Research Stations in Alberta (AAC)
- ✓ Encourage the BC Ministry of Agriculture to continue providing extension services and to expand the Regional Agrologist Network to the PRRD (AAC, BCMA)
- ✓ Support the introduction of high-speed Internet access throughout the Regional District

## Implementation:

- Review current research and extension services provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Lacombe and Beaverlodge Research Farm
- Liaise with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada when necessary to facilitate communication between the agricultural community and Research Centre staff
- Encourage local producers to provide Agriculture and Agri-Food staff with suggestions to encourage programs and services that strengthen agriculture in the PRRD
- Communicate and promote research findings to producers in the PRRD where possible
- Review current BC Ministry of Agriculture extension services and programs available to agriculture in the PRRD.
- Identify and document gaps in extension needs and services
- Continue to liaise with BCMA staff to encourage programs and services that strengthen agriculture in the PRRD, including the extension of services into the PRRD
- Provide feedback and recommendations to BCMA on how existing programs and services may be improved to better serve the agricultural community
- Promote BCMA programs and services to the agricultural community
- Identify regions without high-speed internet access
- Encourage the telecommunications sector to implement high-speed internet service throughout the Regional District

- ✓ Support new and existing leadership development programs for agricultural producers (B.C. 4-H, CFBMC and CAHRC)

- ✓ Support training and networking opportunities for agricultural producers and other appropriate parties to come together and address important issues facing the agricultural community (AAC, producer associations)

#### Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Conduct, in cooperation with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, at least two producer-to-producer extension activities to stimulate longer term availability of practical, regionally specific extension services (AAC, BCMA, Producer Associations, IAF)
- ✓ Encourage ongoing work on how agriculture will be impacted by climate change by advocating for additional research funding and by supporting organizations and groups when obstacles arise

- Promote leadership development programs for youth including the Peace River branches of the B.C. 4-H.
- Review leadership development resources available through Canada Farm Business Management Council and Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council
- Encourage the development of regional leadership programs
- Identify partners in planning and carrying out training and networking opportunities including producer associations, non-profits, and academic institutions
- Support development of live interactive webinars
- Continue to encourage regular meetings within the agricultural community

#### Implementation:

- Review the merits of producer-led extension strategy and activities with the agricultural community
- Provide examples of producer extension strategies occurring in other jurisdictions such as *Metro Vancouver's Regional Food System Strategy Roundtables*, *Community Futures Fraser Fort George Beyond the Market Program* and the *Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems Sustainable Agriculture Research Center at University of Wisconsin – Madison*
- Identify extension needs that are currently not being met
- Liaise with producers to determine financial requirements
- Assist, where possible, with funding proposals
- Ensure relevant proposals indicate a reasonable return on investment



## Resources:

Implementation of these policy or action items will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets. The pilot project producer-to-producer extension samples are estimated to cost \$5,000 each.

### 2.4.2 Encourage Education and Succession Planning

Contact with educators can bring about more educational opportunities for producers. The agricultural industry in the PRRD is also concerned about its capacity to attract replacement producers, particularly during a period when alternative work, such as work with the oil and gas sector, is so attractive to young people. Mentoring and Exchange programs may help agricultural producers address issues of succession and help provide more opportunities for agricultural development.

## Discussion:

Greater liaison between local agricultural communities and local educators may expand the range of educational opportunities available to producers and will assist them to remain innovative and current. This liaison may be particularly beneficial for those near the regional campuses of Northern Lights College in Chetwynd, Dawson Creek and Fort St John. General Business and Business Management programs may be particularly relevant to some producers and there may be more specific areas of interest for producers if more communication between educators and the agricultural community was a regular practice.

It may be relevant for the PRRD to sponsor a study on agricultural producer educational needs similar to the one done for Seniors in 2007 and conducted by the University of Northern BC.

Conferences and workshops with relevant agricultural topics and held at local College campuses may help the agricultural industry to become more involved with local educators.

Agricultural producers are ageing. The average age of producers in the PRRD is about 55 years<sup>9</sup>, slightly lower than the provincial average of 55.7 years. Succession is an issue for the industry in terms of ensuring its future economic contribution. Succession is a particularly stressful issue for producers as some are saying that young people seem reluctant to enter the industry in the PRRD.

Mentoring programs are common within most industries and the Canadian Farm Business Management Council recently introduced a program called *Step Up* which provides mentees with an onsite learning placement.

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<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada, *Census of Agriculture 2011*.

The agricultural industry may offer progressive producers financial returns commensurate with those of skilled entrepreneurs in other sectors of the economy. In other jurisdictions, there are signs of growing interest in agriculture among younger people. A recent issue of *Country Guide* was dedicated entirely to young people starting agriculture or getting involved with the agricultural industry in some capacity.<sup>10</sup> Many young people are attracted to agriculture because of the lifestyle. Some young people may wish to enter the agricultural industry but are unsure about how to do so and are unfamiliar with the challenges of that career choice. Some established producers who are considering retiring from the industry in the next decade may be willing to share their knowledge and skills with others. Options may include:

- promotion of area agricultural businesses where established producers may be willing to mentor young people to help them gain the skills needed to enter the industry
- promotion of area agricultural businesses where established producers may be willing to provide economic support to young people as they evolve into eventual ownership of the business

#### Objective:

To encourage educational opportunities for producers and to support efforts of the industry to attract new entrants to agriculture.

#### Policy (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support industry efforts to encourage people to enter agricultural production, through the work of educational institutions and the agricultural community (AAC, educators, commodity groups)

#### Actions (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Work with partner organizations willing to introduce an appropriate mentorship program where experienced producers may assist others wishing to start production in the PRRD (AAC, IAF, CFBMC, commodity groups)
- ✓ In cooperation with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the BC Ministry of Agriculture, initiate appropriate conferences, seminars or

#### Implementation:

- Continue to promote the benefits of working in agriculture

#### Implementation:

- Research successful mentoring programs in other jurisdictions
- Develop outline for a mentorship program suitable for the PRRD
- Seek experienced producers willing to act as mentors to others
- Determine topics for needed seminars and workshops in consultation with the agricultural

<sup>10</sup> *Country Guide*, November 2011.

workshops where options for expanding agricultural businesses and topics such as succession planning may be presented and addressed (AAC, BCMA, commodity groups, local campuses)	communities in North, South and West Peace
✓ Initiate a study, in cooperation with the UNBC, to address agricultural producer needs and interests in further education and support (AAC, BCMA, UNBC, IAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage local conferences and workshops in cooperation with local educators</li> <li>• Prepare terms of reference for study</li> <li>• Work with UNBC, BCMA and Investment Agriculture Foundation to conduct the study</li> </ul>

#### Resources:

Implementation of the policy will require staff and committee time to be included in future line department budgets. Implementing the action item on mentoring will require some additional study at an estimated cost of \$8,000. Workshops on options for productive agriculture are estimated at \$3,000 each with one workshop being held annually. The PRRD share for a study in cooperation with UNBC is estimated at \$15,000.

### 2.4.3 Support Management of Risks in Agriculture

Supporting management of risks to agricultural businesses, when brought forward by the agricultural industry, can help increase the financial viability, growth and success of agriculture in the Regional District.

#### Discussion:

Risk is inherent to the agricultural sector and producers in the PRRD are continually managing adverse weather, pests, wildlife, disease and significant shifts in commodity prices. A variety of effective risk management programs play an essential role in maintaining a viable and growing agricultural sector in the Regional District. Effective risk management should include efforts to both minimize general risk and provide acute disaster relief.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Growing Forward 2 includes ongoing funding for a comprehensive suite of Business Risk Management programs and an investment of \$3 billion in strategic initiatives to foster innovation, competitiveness and market development. Business Risk Management programs include, AgriInsurance, AgriStability, AgriInvest, AgriRecovery and Advance Payment Program. Some PRRD producers use these programs.

The PRRD recently participated in the Peace Region Adaptation Strategies series pilot project, the BC Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative. Three priority impact areas were identified in the final document as the highest priorities for agricultural adaptation in the PRRD, including increasing dry

and drought conditions, increasing precipitation and changing precipitation, and increased variability and weather extremes. Strategies and actions were identified to address these areas.

The process of developing the Peace Region BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy included workshops which brought the agricultural community together to identify priorities in adapting to climate change.

The process used in the Climate Action Initiative is an effective model for how the agricultural community can mobilize to address other important issues that might include volatility of global markets, adverse weather events, predator management, crop insurance, disaster relief, and management of invasive species. Workshops, roundtable meetings and presentations by knowledgeable people may increase the capacity of the agricultural community to prevent risks and the damage they cause.

Objective:

To increase sustainability of agriculture in the Regional District by supporting efforts to establish relevant risk management services and programs.

Policies/Actions (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Encourage Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue offering and improving Business Risk Management programs available through Growing Forward 2 (AAC, BCMA)
- ✓ Support agricultural community adaptation to immediate and long-term challenges posed by climate change (AAC)
- ✓ Support agricultural community workshops and strategies based on the model established through the *BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy* to help the agricultural community to address other risks associated with agricultural production in the PRRD (AAC, BCMA, Agricultural Community)

Implementation:

- Review Business Risk Management programs offered by Growing Forward 2
- Provide comments and suggestions for other programs or program improvements where relevant
- Support program improvements based on feedback from the agricultural community
- Continue to work with the BC Agriculture Council on the Adaptation strategy
- Monitor the implementation of the strategy set out in the *Peace Region BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy*
- Continue to liaise with key contacts in the agricultural community to identify priority areas

## Resources:

Implementation of these policy or action items will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets.

### 2.4.4 Encourage Agri-tourism, Value-Added and Vertical Integration

Adding value to agricultural operations through agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration can assist the agricultural sector with further diversity and expansion. The PRRD Official Community Plan supports this activity.

#### Discussion:

Agri-tourism is the practice of attracting visitors to a working agricultural operation or an agricultural area for commercial purposes. Successful examples include sales outlets on the agricultural operation or tours of the agricultural business.

Culinary tourism is the pursuit of unique culinary experiences that might involve beef or bison barbecues or the development of specialty cheeses or others. Local processed foods are of interest to many tourists. Such products may be marketed for sale from the agricultural business or from local farmers' markets. Culinary tourism can be a year-round business opportunity catering to local residents as well as visitors.

There may be opportunities in the PRRD for increased economic development from agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration, particularly on agricultural operations located close to larger urban centres or those close to roads with higher volumes of tourist travel such as Highway 97 from Chetwynd and the Alaska Highway.

The Agricultural Land Commission requires that agri-tourism activities be accessory to the principal use of the agricultural business. However, the Agricultural Land Commission supports agri-tourism as a way to increase agricultural income and contribute to greater rural stability.

Other jurisdictions are finding ways to increase interest in local agricultural products with festivals such as "Everything Apples" in Washington State.<sup>11</sup> In Ontario<sup>12</sup> some producers are working to create a renaissance in agriculture through products such as heritage livestock like Highland Cattle, heritage poultry, herbs and other specialty products such as certain varieties of garlic and mushrooms. In the PRRD, focus on livestock or specialty market garden products may create interest in local and tourist consumers.

Vertical integration is the business practice of bringing more parts of the business goal into the production unit. An example in agriculture might be a business growing herbs that decides to make

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<sup>11</sup> *Everything Apples*, Northwest Travel, July/August, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Donald, Betsey. *From Kraft to Craft: Innovation and Creativity in Ontario's Food Economy*. Martin Prosperity Institute, February 2009.

salad dressings for sale from the agricultural operation, or at farmers' markets. Peace River Regional District agricultural producers may be most likely to find vertical integration opportunities within the livestock sectors or using market garden products and extending into processed products for sale.

#### Objective:

To support the expansion of the agricultural industry through agri-tourism ,culinary tourism and vertical integration.

#### Policies (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support and encourage the agricultural industry to introduce more agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration in the PRRD (AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions, Northern BC Tourism Association, local tourism groups such as Tourism Dawson Creek)

#### Implementation:

- Consider agri-tourism and culinary tourism as a possible driver for further economic development in the PRRD
- Partner with other organizations interested in tourism

#### Actions (Partners)

The PRRD will:

- ✓ In cooperation with the BCMA introduce appropriate seminars or workshops to provide further ideas of agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration (AAC, BCMA)

#### Implementation:

- Consider seminars or workshops in cooperation with BCMA
- identify ideas and suggestions for agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration

#### Resources:

The cost of implementing the policy will include staff time as identified in future line department budgets. Seminars or workshops on agri-tourism may require some support funding estimated at \$3,000 per seminar.

### 2.4.5 Encourage Environmental Protection

Support for environmental protection is high among agricultural producers and citizens.

#### Discussion:

People involved in agricultural production are, for the most part, quality land stewards. Operating from self-interest to some extent, producers understand the importance of ensuring their land is kept

healthy and productive. But producers also resent being told what to do with their land when the implication is they are not following appropriate management practices.

It is recognized that following selected guidelines related to protection of the environment may cost producers enough additional money to affect their capacity to remain competitive with other agricultural jurisdictions.

The *Environmental Farm Plan program*, funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the National Agricultural Policy Framework, *Growing Forward*, and offered through the BC Agriculture Council, offers producers some opportunity for cash support for environmental actions they may undertake. Completion of an Environmental Farm Plan is recommended as a way for producers to demonstrate due diligence in their production practices should those practices be questioned for their impact on the environment.

#### Objective:

To maximize environmental protection from agricultural practices in the PRRD.

#### Policy (Partners):

The PRRD will:

- ✓ Support guidelines and programs provided by appropriate government bodies and producer associations for protection of air, soil and water (AAC, BCMA, AAFC, producer associations)

#### Implementation:

- Publicize relevant programs where possible
- Encourage producers to participate in appropriate programs
- Support appropriate incentives to encourage producer involvement

#### Resources:

Implementation will require staff and committee time to be included in future budgets.



### 3 IMPLEMENTATION AND MOVING FORWARD

This section of the Regional Agricultural Plan addresses implementation and regular monitoring and review of the Plan. It places the identified actions in priority, and provides estimates for the cost of completing the actions. The role of the Agricultural Advisory Committee is also addressed because the AAC will be involved in monitoring the plan and working to assist with its implementation. Because implementation is expected to occur over an estimated 20 year time line, a monitoring and review process, for use by staff and the AAC, is provided.

#### 3.1 ACTION PRIORITIES AND COST ESTIMATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Tables 2, 3, and 4 identify the action priorities to be addressed in the course of implementation. The action priorities are grouped by term: short (the first 5 years), medium (6 to 10 years), and long (11 to 20 years). In most instances, the actions will be completed by staff and the AAC working with other partners and, in some cases, using the services of external personnel.

The total cost of implementation over 20 years is estimated to be \$152,000, with \$80,000 to be spent in the short term and an additional \$72,000 estimated for the medium and long term periods.



Table 2: Short Term Implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan

Strategy Area	Initiative	SHORT TERM Action	Line Budget	Additional
Welcoming Business Environment	2.1.2 Ensure Effective AAC	Request an annual work plan from the AAC and ensure an appropriate budget for completion of the work plan	X	
	2.1.3 Provide Regular Consultation with Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request the AAC meet regularly with producers</li> </ul>	X	
	2.1.5 Encourage Regulation Reflect PRRD Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an appropriate "agricultural lens" to review existing and future rules and regulations developed by the PRRD and applicable to the PRRD when developed by other bodies such as the provincial government (AAC, BCMA)</li> </ul>		\$10,000
	2.1.7 Promote Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review areas of the PRRD where large agricultural equipment is moved regularly and provide signs to make motorists aware of slower moving agricultural equipment</li> </ul>	X	
Services and Infrastructure	2.2.1 Provide a Water Strategy for Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Regional District resource base to increase knowledge of water issues and water management</li> </ul>	X	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and encourage area water committees on an "as needed" basis to review and identify water issues including reviewing and addressing water issues for agriculture in the shorter term</li> </ul>		\$18,000
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate a pilot project with agricultural producers willing to participate to identify baseline data on water use by agriculture</li> </ul>		\$25,000
	2.2.3 Encourage Local Processing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the development of the agricultural industry is considered by the Economic Development Commissions and other appropriate agencies and groups in the PRRD</li> </ul>	X	
	2.2.5 Processing and Value-Added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the development of the agricultural industry is considered by EDAC and others</li> </ul>	X	
Agricultural Land Base	2.3.1 Protect Agricultural Land for Agricultural Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare an agricultural impact guideline for use by the AAC to help address ways that an application for exclusion, non-agricultural use or subdivision will support or be of benefit to agriculture.</li> </ul>		\$5,000
Producer Practices	2.4.1 Encourage Research and Extension	Conduct, in cooperation with the BC Ministry of Agriculture, at least two producer-to-producer extension activities to stimulate longer term availability of practical, regionally specific extension services		\$10,000
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage ongoing work on how agriculture will be impacted by climate change by advocating for additional research funding and by supporting organizations and groups when obstacles arise</li> </ul>	X	

Strategy Area	Initiative	SHORT TERM Action	Line Budget	Additional
	2.4.2 Education and Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In cooperation with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the BC Ministry of Agriculture, initiate appropriate conferences, seminars or workshops where options for expanding agricultural businesses and topics such as succession planning may be presented and addressed</li> </ul>		\$6,000
	2.4.4 Encourage Agri-tourism, Value-added and Vertical Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In cooperation with the BCMA introduce appropriate seminars or workshops to provide further ideas of agri-tourism, culinary tourism and vertical integration</li> </ul>		\$6,000
Funding Estimate (5 years)			\$80,000	

Table 3: Medium Term Implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan

Strategy Area	Initiative	MEDIUM TERM Action	Line Budget	Additional
Welcoming Business Environment	2.1.2 AAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate regular ongoing monitoring by the AAC of selected indicators affecting agriculture in the PRRD</li> </ul>	X	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide updates to the Agricultural Profile consistent with the release of agricultural statistics relevant to the PRRD</li> </ul>		\$10,000
	2.1.4 Foster Communications Among Resource Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Working Group to be composed of industry leaders and workers (agriculture, oil and gas, representative industry workers) who will meet with PRRD Senior personnel to review industry issues and concerns (AAC, PRRD Senior personnel, Industry leaders, industry workers)</li> </ul>	X	
	2.1.7 Promote Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a brochure, suitable for distribution to PRRD citizens and new arrivals to the Regional District, outlining the role and importance of agriculture, including information about normal farm practices resulting from a productive industry (AAC, BCMA, IAF, agricultural community)</li> </ul>	X	\$7,000
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate idea of producers placing appropriate signs in well-travelled areas of the PRRD indicating crops grown or other agricultural activities present (AAC, agricultural community)</li> </ul>	X	
	2.1.9 Establish Good Neighbour Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and promote a "good neighbour" policy to encourage goodwill, respect for all opinions, and the spirit of being good neighbours among all citizens when addressing issues of conflict</li> </ul>	X	
Services and Infrastructure	2.2.4 Encourage Local Purchasing of Agricultural Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of a local food council or agricultural direct marketing association</li> </ul>	X	

Strategy Area	Initiative	MEDIUM TERM Action	Line Budget	Additional
Producer Practices	2.4.2 Education and Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partner organizations willing to introduce an appropriate mentorship program where experienced producers may assist others wishing to start production in the PRRD</li> </ul>		\$8,000
Funding Estimate (5 years)				\$25,000

Table 4: Long Term Implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan

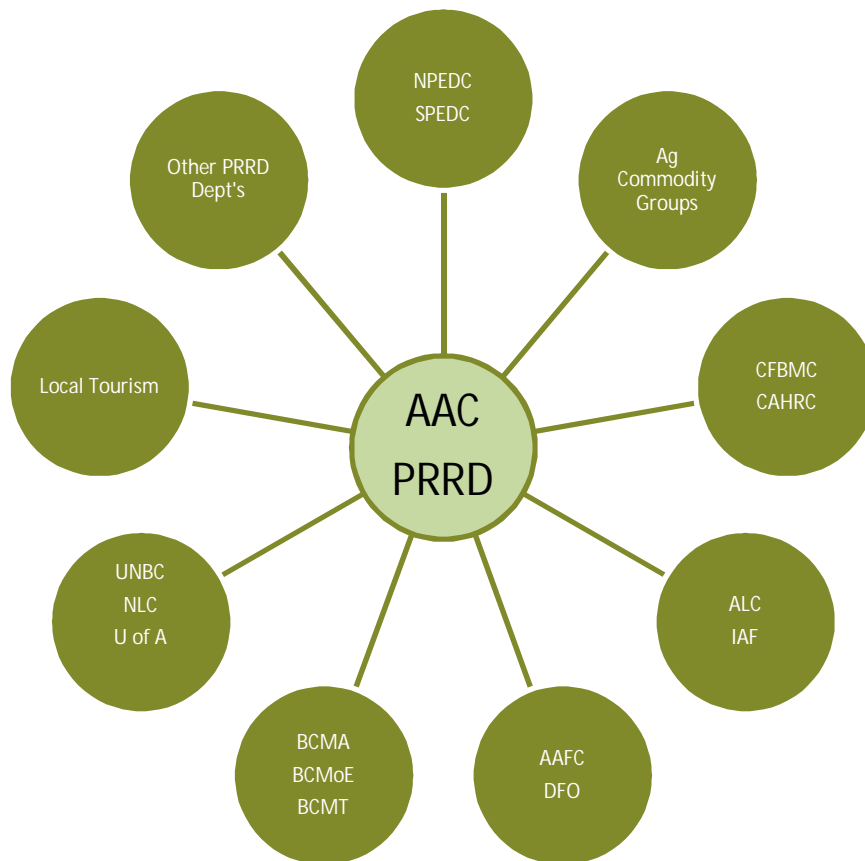
Strategy Area	Initiative	LONG TERM Action	Line Budget	Additional
Welcoming Business Environment	2.1.2 AAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide updates to the Agricultural Profile consistent with the release of agricultural statistics relevant to the PRRD</li> </ul>		\$10,000
	2.1.3 Provide Regular Consultation with Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and support the development of local producer organizations or other locally-based producer associations or groups</li> </ul>	X	
	2.1.7 Promote Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a study on the economic impact of agriculture based on the model used for the recently completed study in the City of Abbotsford</li> </ul>		\$12,000
Services and Infrastructure	2.2.1 Provide a Water Strategy for Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Water Use Strategy for Agriculture, including groundwater, in cooperation with other industries and citizens of the PRRD</li> </ul>	X	
	2.2.2 Address Road and Traffic Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review PRRD road infrastructure to identify shortcomings in the context of growing road demand</li> </ul>	X	
	2.2.4 Encourage Local Purchasing of Agricultural Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of local food purchasing policies in large public institutions in the PRRD</li> </ul>	X	
Agricultural Land Base	2.3.1 Protect Agricultural Land for Agricultural Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate, in cooperation with the Agricultural Land Commission and larger municipalities in the PRRD, a boundary review study of the ALR with particular emphasis on areas where the ALR boundary abuts urban development</li> </ul>	X	
Producer Practices	2.4.2 Education and Succession Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate a study, in cooperation with the UNBC, to address agricultural producer needs and interests in further education and support</li> </ul>	X	\$15,000
Funding Estimate (10 years)				\$47,000

### 3.2 ROLE OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

With fewer British Columbians living on farms, and because of the significant amounts of agricultural land contained within local government boundaries, it is important for local governments to maintain contact with the agricultural community. The Regional Agricultural Plan provides for regular consultation with the agricultural community through the PRRD Agricultural Advisory Committee. The BC Ministry of Agriculture supports Agricultural Advisory Committees for this purpose. As of December, 2013, there were 46 Agricultural Advisory Committees serving local governments across BC.

The mandate of the PRRD Agricultural Advisory Committee, as noted in Section 2.1.2 above, is adequate to ensure an active and effective role for the AAC in the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan. Based on the AAC mandate “to provide advice to the Regional Board on matters relating to, or influencing, agriculture in the region and to encourage and enhance the sustainability and vitality of agriculture in the region”, the AAC emerged as the body logically positioned to provide coordination and leadership to the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan.

Figure 3: The AAC/PRRD and Partners



Working collaboratively and in partnership with other groups and organizations, and with the support of Regional Board and staff, it is expected that implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan will be straightforward and systematic. Figure 3 illustrates the range of potential partners in the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan. These partners are fully listed in Appendix 4.2.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee will ensure it has the capacity to identify and understand agricultural issues and concerns of importance to Regional Board. In this way, the AAC will be in a position to provide the necessary advice and support to Regional Board in a timely and efficient manner.

### 3.3 MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCESS

Indicators related to the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan may be monitored by the Agricultural Advisory Committee on a regular basis, consistent with regular reporting to Regional Board on the status of agricultural development in the PRRD. Some statistical indicators such as agricultural unit gate sales and land contained within the ALR, and identified in the Background Report, contained as an Appendix to the Regional Agricultural Plan, are useful in this regard.

Monitoring selected indicators may assist the AAC to assess the merits of selected medium and long term actions identified in the plan.

Selected items from the following indicators of agricultural development may also be monitored if reliable data sources can be established:

- increase and/or change in marketing used by producers such as:
  - ✓ changes in sales through farmers' markets
  - ✓ changes in farm direct marketing opportunities
  - ✓ volume of local sales of local products
  - ✓ evidence of changes in agri-tourism
- number of agricultural operations and percentage of agricultural land in production
- number of agricultural operations sold in the PRRD
- amount of export sales of local products
- number of applications for removal in the ALR
- number of applications for sub-division in the ALR
- number of agricultural education courses through local Universities and colleges, including business planning courses
- number of producer/neighbour complaints received by the PRRD
- anecdotal evidence of positive comments about agriculture received by the PRRD
- anecdotal evidence about value-added activity
- anecdotal evidence related to trends in agriculture.

Regular reviews of the Regional Agricultural Plan, possibly on a bi-annual basis, should be conducted by the Agricultural Advisory Committee as implementation proceeds.

# 4 APPENDICES

## 4.1 REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The components of the consultation process included:

- terms of reference for a Regional Agricultural Plan provided by the Agricultural Advisory Committee and supported by the Regional Board
- workshops/meetings with the Agricultural Advisory Committee on December 18, 2012, April 16, 2013 and September 17, 2013.
- telephone interviews completed with 37 stakeholders throughout the Regional District
- thirteen consultation meetings involving 262 participants completed primarily in April and May, 2013, with one additional meeting held September 16, 2013
- additional input provided by email
- a survey conducted in the summer and fall of 2013.

### 4.1.1 Terms of Reference

The Agricultural Advisory Committee developed Terms of Reference for the Regional Agricultural Plan and the Terms were supported by the Regional Board. The Terms of Reference resulted in the development of the following Guiding Principles for the Regional Agricultural Plan. The Regional Agricultural Plan will:

- contain a vision for the future of agriculture that will include a permanent role for agriculture as an essential component of the physical, ecological, social, and economic well being of the Regional District
- contain policy and governance items and recommendations for the future development of community plans and a regional growth strategy
- identify changes in business management which could be implemented by producers or agricultural organizations
- identify strategies to enhance agriculture in the context of competition with other land uses such as oil and gas and forestry and mining
- address current issues with policies and recommendations to ensure the best possible future for agriculture
- identify business practices that will help the industry to flourish.

### 4.1.2 Workshops with the AAC

Three meetings/workshops were held with the AAC. The workshops resulted in the early development of issues and options for the Regional Agricultural Plan.

#### 4.1.3 Telephone Interviews

Thirty-seven people were interviewed by telephone to review issues affecting agriculture in their area. Participants were asked to comment on the strengths of the industry, weaknesses or obstacles to be overcome, and to offer their suggestions or ideas for what should be contained in the eventual Regional Agricultural Plan.

#### 4.1.4 The Consultation Meetings

Thirteen consultation meetings were held in the Regional District. Each meeting was generally about two hours in length. Similar to the telephone interviews, participants were asked to comment on the issues in their area, strengths of the industry, weaknesses or obstacles to be overcome, and to offer their suggestions or ideas for what should be contained in the eventual Regional Agricultural Plan.

Attendance at the meetings varied. Total attendance for the 13 meetings was 262. Discussion at the meetings was often vigorous and extensive with a wide range of issues and concerns addressed and many positive suggestions for the Regional Agricultural Plan were heard. Although the objective of the Regional Agricultural Plan, “to encourage and support agricultural development” was presented at the meetings, some participants expressed cynicism about the Regional Agricultural Plan and the process for its development, fearing it might lead to increasing levels of regulation and rules for the industry.

Several of the meetings were affected by participant’s upset by the Regional District’s decision to include rural areas in the building inspection process. Concern about this issue among some participant’s may have inflated attendance at some meetings but the average attendance of about 20 per meeting is marginally lower but generally consistent with similar meetings held in other jurisdictions.

#### 4.1.5 Additional Information by Email

Six emails related to the consultation process were received. The email messages provided additional comments on the issues. One included a report on the Site C Clean Energy Project by the Peace Valley Environment Association and the BC Womens’ Institute. Another included an article on the Regional Agricultural Plan written by Energetic City on April 24, 2013.

#### 4.1.6 A Survey

The survey of stakeholders was mailed to 500 households in the PRRD, was further made available to about 30 people who had provided their email addresses during the consultation meetings, and was available for completion on the PRRD website.

The survey results were used to test, and in some cases enhance, the main strategies, policies and actions being considered for the Regional Agricultural Plan. Forty-three respondents completed surveys. No statistical merit was considered for the survey due to the mixed process of distribution of the survey instrument and the low response rate.

The following two main inputs were identified from the survey and they were used to supplement the consultation process for the Regional Agricultural Plan.

1. Participants showed strongest support<sup>13</sup> for the following possible policies or actions:
  - ✓ Identify and promote the economic impact of agriculture in the PRRD
  - ✓ Regularly consult with area producers on agricultural issues and concerns
  - ✓ Facilitate the goal of increasing the purchasing of local agricultural products in local markets
  - ✓ Negotiate an appropriate understanding with the Agricultural Land Commission to address local subdivision and land uses
  - ✓ Foster and facilitate increased communication opportunities among all resource-based industries
  - ✓ Develop a long range water management and use strategy to address water rights for agriculture, other industry and citizens
  - ✓ Support processes and reviews to encourage rules and regulations be relevant to agricultural conditions in the Peace
  - ✓ Protect agricultural land for agricultural uses with emphasis on land classes 1 to 4 (and later 5c)
  - ✓ Support producer efforts with establishing relevant risk management programs such as crop insurance, disaster relief, addressing climate change issues, managing invasive species, managing pests and wildlife and others
  - ✓ Provide a section of the PRRD website to inform citizens about agriculture and agricultural issues
  - ✓ Support agricultural access to available Crown Land
  - ✓ Support projects related to the development of local processing
  - ✓ Support provision and maintenance of local transportation and rail services for agriculture.
2. Participants also provided some comments on the various questions contained in the survey. The comments were useful for gaining perspective and insight from the participants. The following comments were identified as most helpful for development of the Regional Agricultural Plan:
  - ✓ Some participants indicated selected items identified should not be considered as PRRD areas of jurisdiction such as supporting agricultural organizations or establishing a staff contact for agriculture
  - ✓ Some participants indicated the PRRD could do little about the problem of attracting young people to agriculture and what is needed for that is more profitability in the sector
  - ✓ In terms of the economic impact of agriculture, some participants commented that agriculture has taken a back seat to other industries lately, such as oil and gas, and it is important for citizens to understand the economic and social contributions of agriculture to the PRRD
  - ✓ Support was provided for regular consulting with area producers and one participant stated:

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<sup>13</sup> Participants were provided with a series of statements that could represent a policy or action to be included in the Regional Agricultural Plan. They were asked to indicate whether they agreed with the statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represented "strongly agree" and 5 represented "strongly disagree" "Strongest support" was deemed to be present for any statement that received more than 2/3 (67%) of participants answering either "1" or "2".



"As the competition for land use increases with the increase in natural gas drilling, producing and exporting activities, as well as many other industries growing in the area, more dialogue is needed to ensure agriculture impacts are understood and mitigated before significant negative impact is imparted to this important aspect of the Peace country."

- ✓ Support was expressed for selling more local agricultural products in local markets. One participant stated:

"This makes a lot of sense in a lot of ways. If you look at many of our grocery store foods, many have travelled a huge distance to be on these shelves, and a lot of these foods can be grown in our area. Less travel means lower carbon footprint, it can lead to much healthier food, and it keeps more local money in our local area."

- ✓ Support was expressed by the participants for more promotion of agriculture and efforts to educate others about agriculture and its role. One participant stated:

"As more Canadians are moving off the land, I do feel we need to provide ways to connect these people with the producers of food and the stewards of the land. More people understanding how important agriculture is to our survival, and understanding the issues modern agriculture faces would have a positive impact for all of us."

- ✓ Protection of agricultural land for agricultural uses was supported in the survey and in other meetings. In addition, many participants also stated their support for protection of agricultural land regardless of its land inventory classification. One participant stated:

"All agricultural land in the Peace River should be protected regardless of classification. Do you not know that land classified as 2 is not better than land classified as class 5 or 6, it is just suitable for a wider range of crops."

## 4.2 PARTNERS FOR THE REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL PLAN<sup>14</sup>

AAC – Agricultural Advisory Committee

AAFC – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

ALC – Agricultural Land Commission

BCCA – BC Cattlemen’s Association

BCMA – BC Ministry of Agriculture

BCMoE – BC Ministry of the Environment

BCMT – BC Ministry of Transportation

CAHRC – Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council

CFBMC – Canadian Farm Business Management Council

DFO – Fisheries and Oceans Canada

IAF – Investment Agriculture Foundation

BCMoFLNRO –BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

NLC – Northern Lights College

NPEDC – North Peace Economic Development Commission

SPEDC – South Peace Economic Development Commission

UNBC – University of Northern British Columbia

U of A – University of Alberta

UNBC – University of Northern BC

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<sup>14</sup> The listing includes mainly Regional Provincial and National partners but many local partners may also contribute to implementation of the Regional Agricultural Plan

## 4.3 THE CONSULTANT TEAM

The team members of Don Cameron Associates participating in this project were:

Don Cameron, M.Sc., P.Ag.

Don Cameron has over 30 years of experience in management, consulting, teaching, research and organizational development. He has worked in a consulting role with farmers in most agricultural commodities in BC and with people in governments, First Nations, the private sector, and with not-for-profit organizations and volunteers. He has 12 years of formal teaching experience and holds a M.Sc. from the School of Agricultural Economics and Extension Education at the University of Guelph. He is a member in good standing of the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists and is the past director for BC on the board of the Agricultural Institute of Canada.

Kari Huhtala, MCIP

Kari Huhtala has over 25 years of policy planning experience in social and community planning, community participatory projects, project/program review and assessment and budgeting planning and review. He has worked as a professional planner with the City of Richmond, City of Vancouver, and the Corporation of Delta on development and municipal land use policies in B.C and he is experienced and familiar with the development of appropriate policies in a municipal context as they affect the farm community.

Janice Richmond, MCIP, P.Ag.

Janice Richmond has had over 30 years of experience in land-use and strategic planning, development, research and community development. While employed by the Corporation of Delta, she was responsible for all agricultural issues including preparing the Agricultural Section of the OCP and updating the zoning bylaw. She is a member of the Planning Institute of BC, Canadian Institute of Planning and the BC Institute of Agrologists.

Georgia Stanley, B.Sc.

Georgia Stanley is a researcher with survey and interviewing experience. She is currently working with the BC Association of Farmers' Markets. Georgia is a graduate of the University of British Columbia from the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. With a special interest in sustainable agriculture, Georgia has been active with the local farm community in the Lower Mainland.

**Peace River Regional District**

**Regional  
Agricultural  
Plan**  
Final Draft  
**Background  
Report**



Prepared by  
Don Cameron Associates  
March, 2014

# Acknowledgements

The completion of this Background Report was made possible by input from Regional District staff and the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Thanks are extended to the Regional Board for providing financial support for development of a Regional Agricultural Plan. Thanks are also owed to the Investment Agriculture Foundation and the BC Ministry of Agriculture for their financial contributions.

Without the contributions of the Regional District's agricultural community this report could not have been completed. Their help was appreciated.

Don Cameron Associates  
March, 2014



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is pleased to participate in this project. AAFC is committed to working with our industry partners and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC to increase public awareness of the importance of the agriculture and the agri-food industry to Canada. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the organization and not necessarily of AAFC.

*Funding provided by:*



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# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide background information for the Regional Agricultural Plan. The Background Report is a foundation document and will continue to be updated as the planning process evolves.

The report presents:

1. an overview of the Regional District
2. selected agricultural statistics and maps describing the extent of agriculture in the Regional District
3. the current context including agricultural capability and a summary of legislation affecting the industry
4. a view to the future, including issues of concern, a vision and key strategy areas where eventual options for policy and action will be developed.

## Overview of the Regional District

The Peace River Regional District is located in North-East British Columbia on the prairie side of the Rocky Mountains. The boundaries contain approximately twelve million hectares (46,000 square miles) of land, 11% within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Most of the population, 70%, resides in the urban municipalities of Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Hudson's Hope, Taylor and Pouce Coupe. Most of the agricultural land is located in the rural areas surrounding the main population centres.

The topography of the area varies from Rocky Mountains in the west to the Interior Plains in the eastern sections. Most of the land is drained by the Peace River or its tributaries. The northern portion of the Regional District is drained by tributaries of the Fort Nelson River.

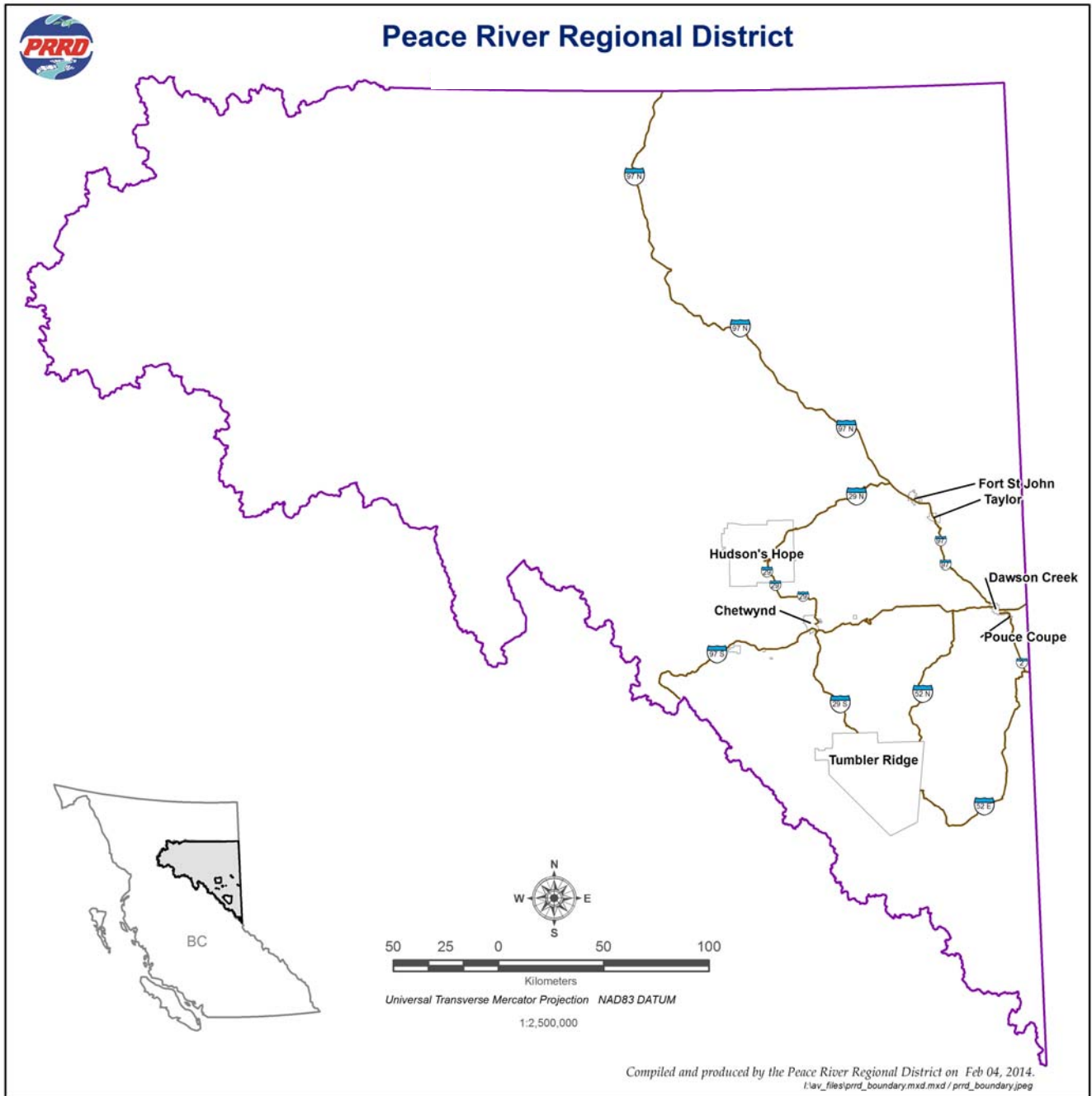
The Peace River Regional District provides local government services to approximately 60,000 people in seven incorporated municipalities and four electoral areas. Often for convenience and point of orientation, and established by custom over the years, the PRRD uses three sub-regions identified by the nearest nodal community or service area. In this context, West Peace is identified by those in the Chetwynd area, North Peace by those who look to Fort St. John as their nodal community, and South Peace is identified with Dawson Creek.

Working cooperatively, the electoral areas and member municipalities of the Regional District provide a wide range of services including:

- noxious weed control
- regional and community recreation
- fire protection
- regional solid waste management
- rural water services
- sewage collection and disposal
- parks
- building inspection
- television rebroadcasting.

The Regional District is a federation of urban and rural areas and is governed by a 12-member Board. Eight of the Directors

Figure 1. The Peace River Regional District





are appointed by the seven municipalities and the other four are elected by voters in the four electoral areas.

The economy of the Regional District is varied. The following sectors are represented:

- agriculture
- tourism
- manufacturing
- petroleum exploration and development
- hydro-electric power generation
- forestry
- mining.

Recent economic developments include an increase in tourism, mining of coal resources in the Rocky Mountain foothills, increased use of aspen in pulp and wood products, diversification in the agricultural sector, and an increase in natural gas and petroleum exploration, development and processing. To learn more about the PRRD see <http://prrd.bc.ca/about/index.php>.

## History of Agriculture

The Peace River region is the only part of British Columbia east of the Rocky Mountains and partially in the high plains division of the Great Plains of North America, giving it a unique, prairie-like environment compared to the rest of the province.<sup>1</sup> The Doig River First Nation,

Blueberry First Nation, and Halfway River First Nation were the first settlers with archeological artifacts dating back more than 10,000 years. These First Nations have moved throughout the region from the Rocky Mountains to the plains of Alberta following animal migrations, seasonal plant growth, hunting, trapping and fishing availability, and harvesting berries and plants throughout the year. Today, the First Nations' people in the Peace River region continue to practice traditional forms of hunting, trapping, and fishing.

The first European settlement of the area began in 1792, when Sir Alexander MacKenzie of the North West Fur Company left Fort Chipewyan to reach the Pacific Coast. He crossed the Rocky Mountains through the Peace River Pass. A fur trader and explorer, Mackenzie's trip led to the expansion of the fur trade in the Peace River region and the establishment of Rocky Mountain Fort, the first non-native settlement in mainland British Columbia. The fur trade expanded throughout the region and new trading posts were established along the Peace River. Some still exist, including one in Fort St. John, established in 1805.

The agricultural potential of the region was first documented by Canada Pacific Railway surveyor Charles Horetzky in 1873 while determining the railway's route as it crossed the country. Horetzky supported building the railway line through the Peace

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<sup>1</sup> Farstad, L., T.M. Lord, A.J. Green and H.J. Hortie. 1965. *Soil Survey of the Peace River Area in British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia

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Department of Agriculture and Research Branch, Canada  
Department of Agriculture.

region, as it would open up the fertile area for agriculture. According to the Royal British Columbia Museum, the first agricultural producer who settled in the region was Hector Tremblay, a French-Canadian. Arriving in 1889 and settling near Pouce Coupe, Tremblay cultivated about four hectares and produced grain, forage and kept a herd of cattle.

When the federal government opened up the “Peace River Block” for homesteaders between 1907 and 1912, other agricultural producers came to the region and settled on the fertile agricultural lands. Small settlements, including Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek, took shape throughout the region.<sup>2</sup> The first families found the land to be well-suited to growing grains, vegetables, and forage for cattle and horses. The warm microclimate and longer daylight hours during the growing season gave the Peace River region some of the best agricultural land in the province.

Despite the challenges of agricultural production away from large market centres, agriculture is important to the Peace River region. Throughout the 20th century, producers in the Peace played an important role supplying food and forage to Northern BC. Early market gardens were cultivated in the rich soils along the Peace River providing fruits, vegetables, cereals, and forage otherwise not available in Northern BC. The region is also an important producer of creeping red fescue seed, first

produced in Canada in the 1930’s. Much of the research associated with creeping red fescue came from the Agriculture Research Station at Beaverlodge, Alberta. The seed thrives in the Peace River region’s long sunny days and cool evenings. Today, the Peace region produces more forage, grain (barley, oats, wheat), seed, and canola than any other region of British Columbia. Cattle ranching is also well established in the region, and game production remains in the area – particularly bison production.<sup>3</sup>

Since the early days of settlement, agriculture has been a way of life in the Peace River Regional District. The agricultural capability of the area has allowed agricultural families to thrive despite harsher winters and location away from larger urban centres and the markets they create. The importance of agriculture is evident from the resiliency and entrepreneurial spirit of the agricultural producers in the region.

## The Regional Agricultural Plan

The Peace River Regional District is developing a Regional Agricultural Plan to be adopted by the Regional District Board upon recommendation from the Electoral Area Directors’ Committee. The Regional Agricultural Plan will be developed in consultation with the community and with the advice and guidance of the Regional District’s Agricultural Advisory Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> *Heritage BC Stops. Dawson Creek.* Heritage BC. <http://www.heritagebcstops.com/peace-river-tour/dawson-creek> (accessed January 5, 2013).

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<sup>3</sup> The British Columbia Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation. 2008. *The Regions.* In *Grow BC: A Guide to BC’s Agriculture Resources.* Abbotsford, BC.

The purpose of the Regional Agricultural Plan is to guide the Regional District in encouraging and supporting agricultural activity both within and outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

## Agriculture in the PRRD

Agricultural census data were reviewed for the past five census periods: 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011. Data from a climate adaptation study in the PRRD was also incorporated.<sup>4</sup>

### Land in the Agricultural Land Reserve

In British Columbia, there are 4,623,841 ha (11,425,354 ac) included in the ALR and 27% of BC's ALR land is located in the Peace River Regional District. The map in Figure 2 illustrates land in the Agricultural Land Reserve in the PRRD. The total land area of the PRRD is about 12 million hectares (actually 11,933,660 ha or 29,487,669 ac), with 1,288,967 ha (3,184,993 ac), or 11% of the entire land base, in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

The agricultural land in the ALR is clustered in the east/central part of the Regional

District and around the areas where the largest numbers of people are living, namely in the communities of Fort St John, Dawson Creek, and other municipalities relatively close to these larger centres.

### Land Use and Land in Agricultural Production

According to the 2011 Census of Agriculture, 823,498 ha (2,034,836 ac) are in agricultural production in the PRRD, which accounts for 64 % of the region's Agricultural Land Reserve. In British Columbia, 2,611,382 ha (6,452,636 ac) are in agricultural production, 56% of the ALR.

Table 1 indicates that since 1991 the amount of land in agricultural production in the PRRD has been relatively stable with the amount in production in 1991 virtually the same as the amount in 2011. The years in

**Table 1. Land in the PRRD in Agricultural Production**

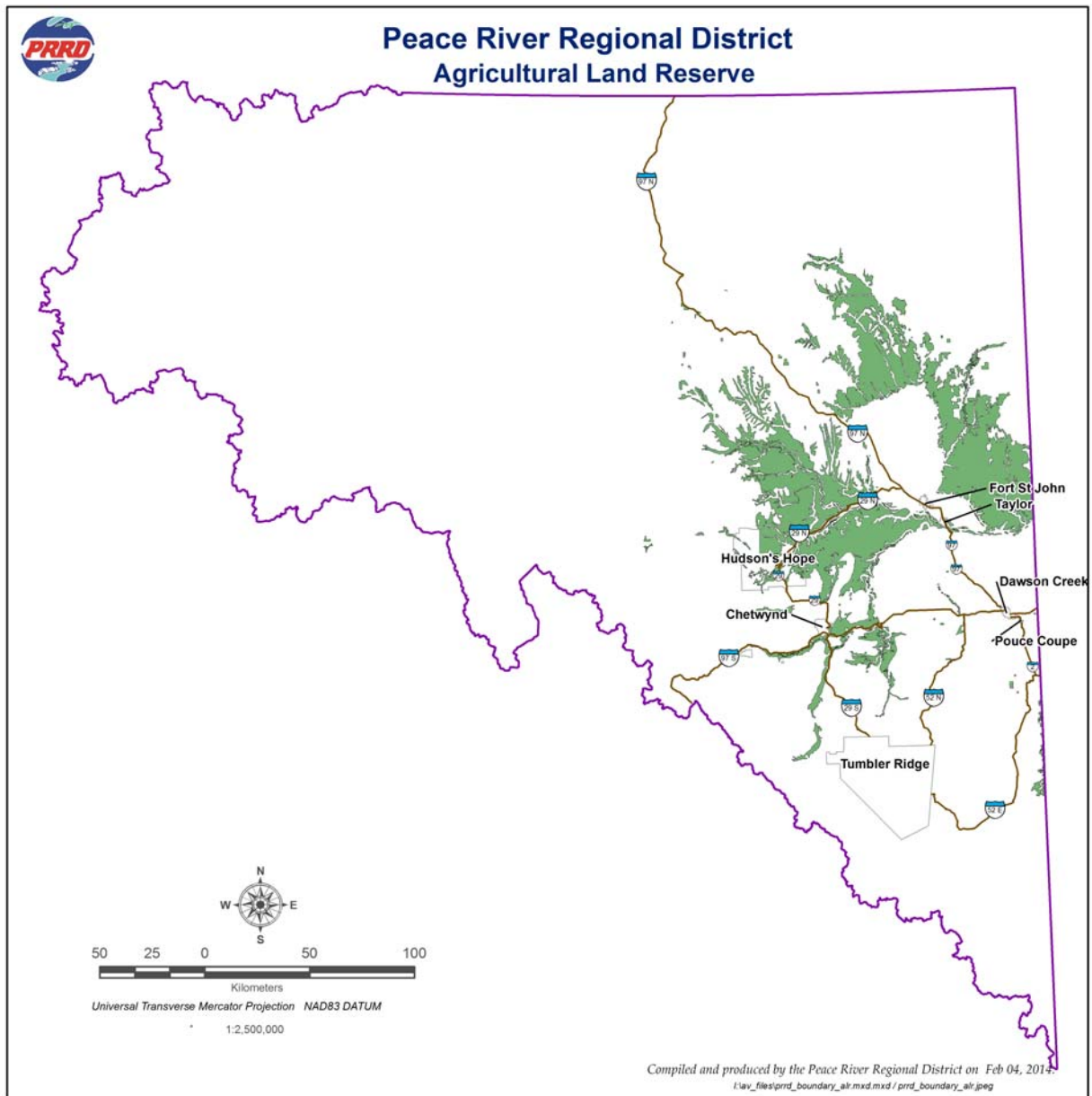
Year	Ha	Ac
1991	823,977	2,036,091
1996	837,183	2,068,724
2001	868,599	2,146,354
2006	885,485	2,188,081
2011	823,498	2,034,907

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.5 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture

between provide for a steady increase in the amount of land in production. Between

<sup>4</sup> Peace Region: BC Agriculture & Climate Change, Regional Adaptation Strategies series, BC Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative, July, 2013 Initiative

**Figure 2. PRRD Agricultural Land Reserve**

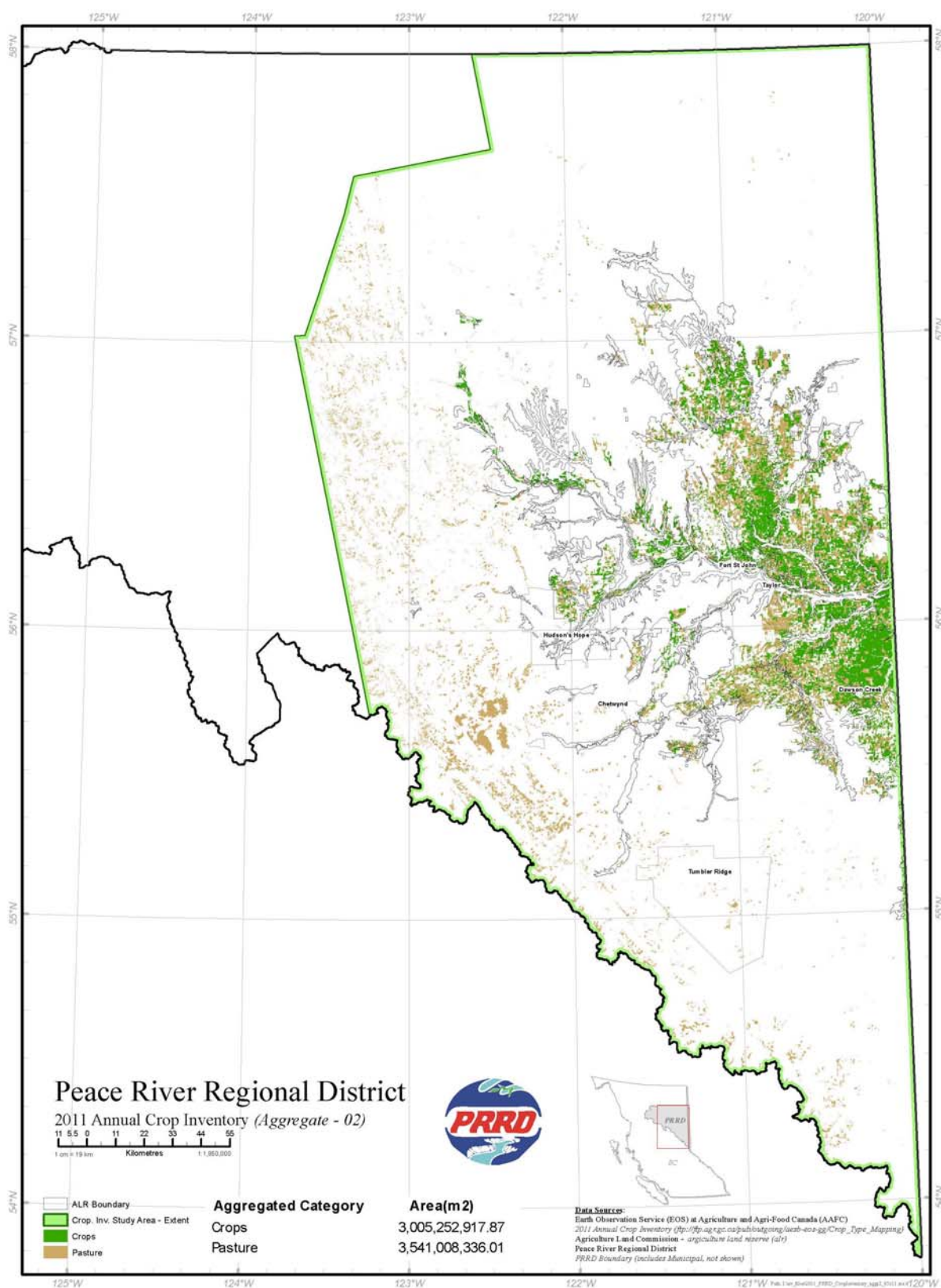


2006 and 2011, the PRRD experienced a 7% decline in the amount of land in agricultural production. However, it should be noted that much of the data outlined in Table 1 is based on information collected by Statistics Canada using a “self-reporting” methodology. Also, some information can be subject to “rounding” if actual reporting

of the data is deemed to create privacy issues. Despite the increases in production reported for the years between 1996 and 2006, we recognize some changes may be related to collection processes used.

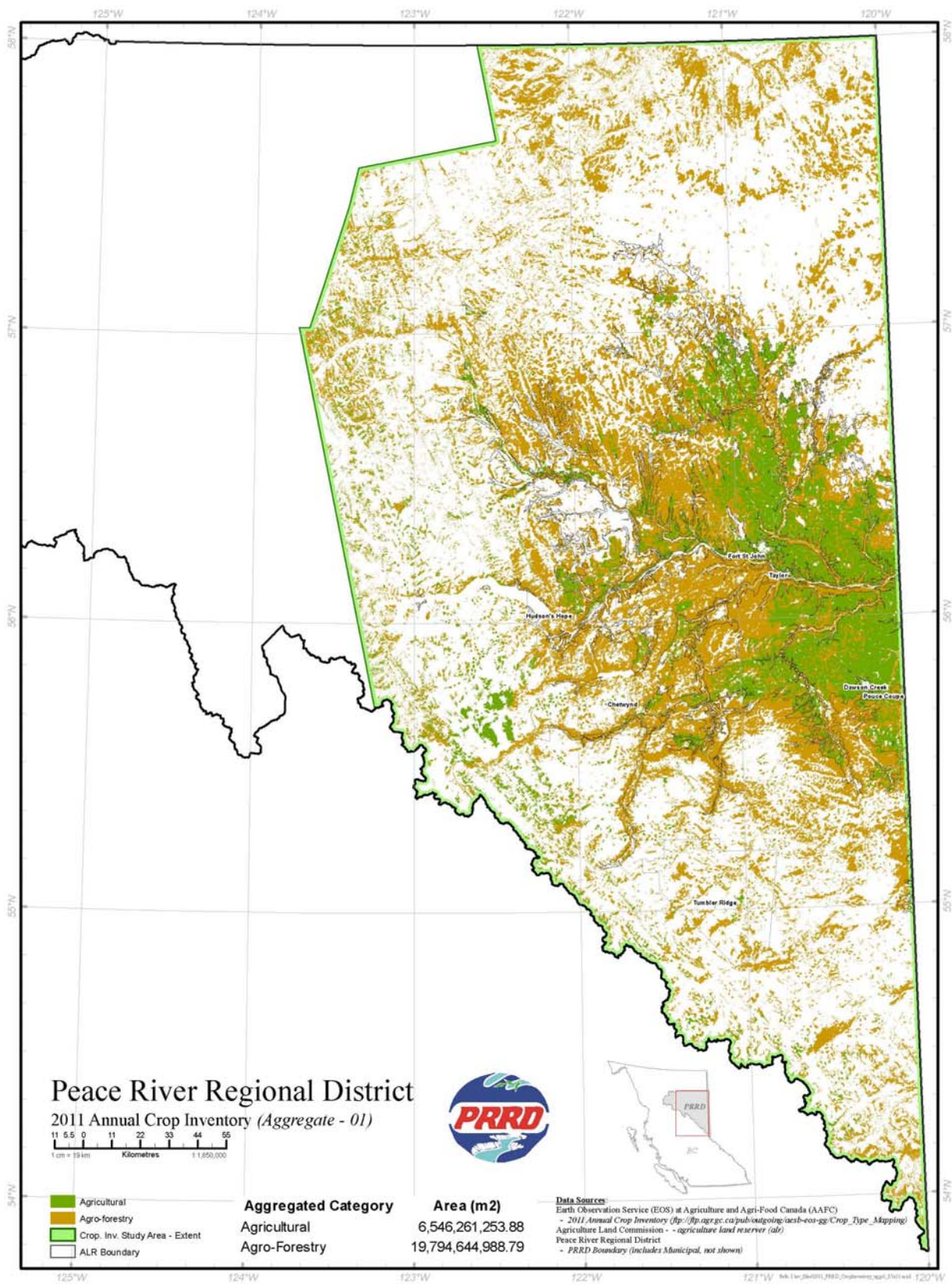
The map in Figure 3 indicates land in agricultural production (crops and pasture)

**Figure 3. Crops and Pasture in the PRRD**





**Figure 4: Agro-Forestry and Agriculture in the PRRD**



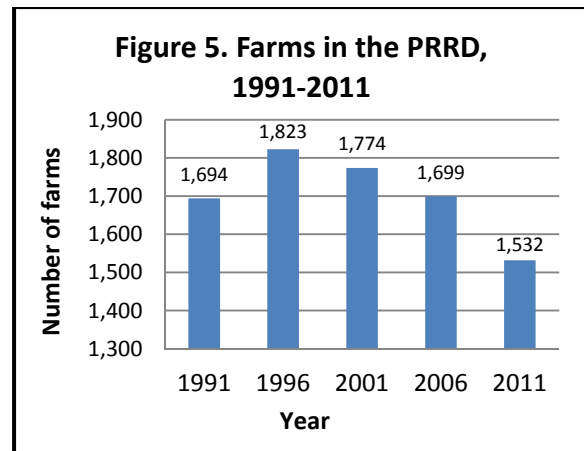
in 2011, according to the Annual Crop Inventory. It is noted there are considerable lands in agricultural production, mainly used for pasture, that lie outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve. These lands are often Crown Lands made available to ranchers for pasturing cattle.

Also noted in Figure 4 is the amount of agro-forestry activity occurring within the Agricultural Land Reserve and within the PRRD. Land used for agro-forestry is some three times more than land used for agriculture and, although data is not specifically available to confirm, a large amount of land within the ALR is also currently being used for agro-forestry.

This suggests considerable land may be available for further agricultural production in the future, should producer interest and potential economic benefits encourage that production.

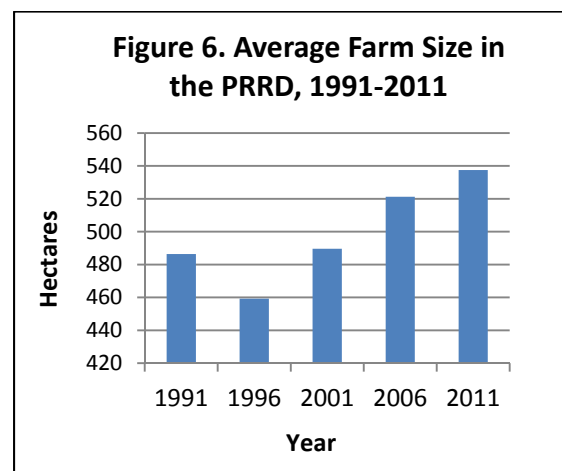
## Number of Farms and Farm Size

According to agricultural census data, there were 1,532 farms in the PRRD in 2011. There were 19,759 farms in British Columbia, about 8% of which are located in the PRRD. Generally, both in Canada and British Columbia, farm numbers have been declining. Figure 5 shows this is also the trend in the PRRD although farm numbers between 1991 and 2006 actually increased modestly. However, they fell again by 162 farms, or by almost 10%, between 1991 and 2011.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.5 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture

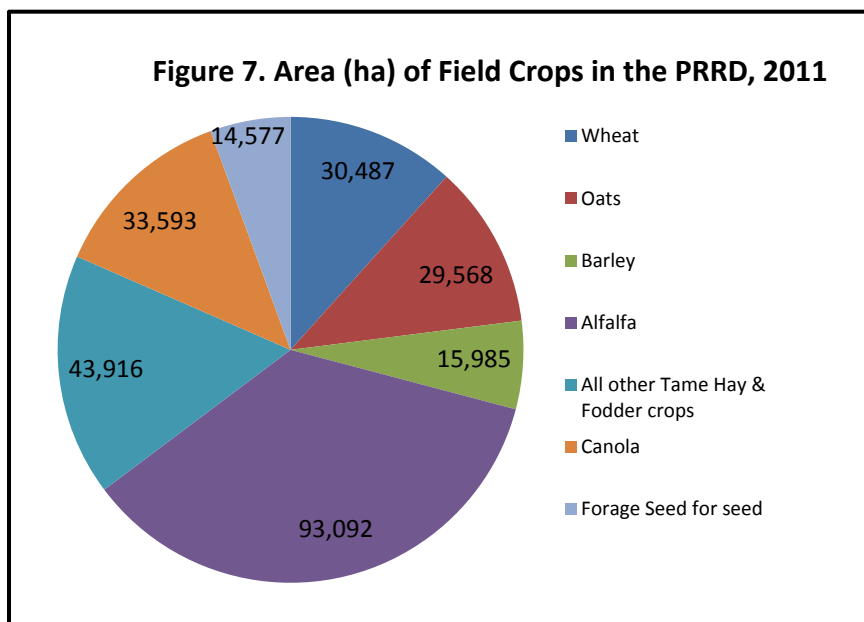
Farms are substantially larger in the PRRD than in other parts of British Columbia (more than 4 times larger) and the size is continuing to increase, consistent with national and provincial trends. In 2011, the average farm size in the PRRD was 537.5 ha (1,328 ac). In comparison, the average provincial farm size then was 132 ha (326 ac). Figure 6 shows the change in PRRD's farm size between 1991 and 2011.



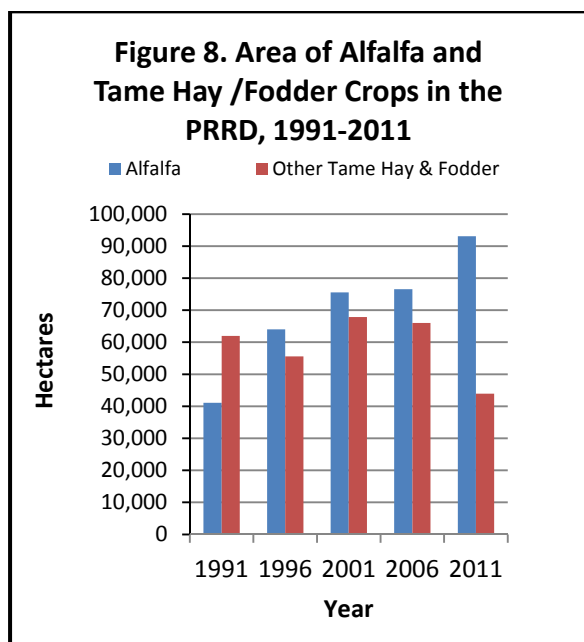
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.5 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

## Main Field Crops

As illustrated in Figure 7, seven main field crops dominate crop production in the PRRD (wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa, other tame hay and fodder crops, canola and forage seed) and they account for 98% of crop production. Alfalfa and tame hay/fodder are grown extensively in the Peace River Regional District, dominating the major crops.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.8 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.8 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

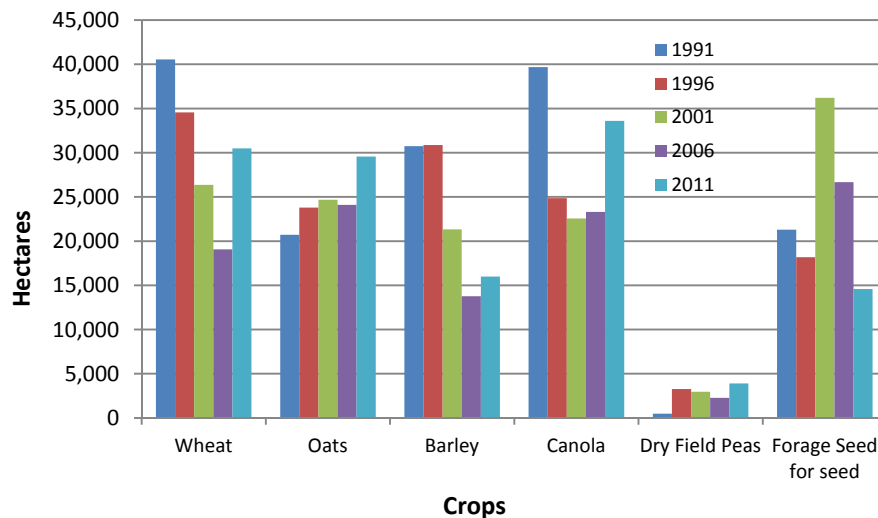
As noted in Figure 8, in 2011, alfalfa was grown on more than 90,000 hectares with a steady increase in the number of hectares growing alfalfa from 1991 to 2011.

Although tame hay/fodder crops were also grown on a large number of hectares (more than 60,000 in 1991) the number of hectares growing tame hay/fodder crops has been declining. In 1991, tame hay/fodder crops were grown on more hectares than alfalfa but that has altered over the years to the point where alfalfa is grown on more than twice as many hectares as tame hay/fodder. Alfalfa is a versatile crop with high feed value and may be the preferred choice for cattle feed over tame hay/fodder.

The situation with the other five main crops making up the vast majority of crops grown in the PRRD is presented in Figure 9. In



**Figure 9. Area of Other Field Crops  
in the PRRD, 1991-2011**



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.8 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture

terms of the number of hectares dedicated to the crop, the amount of land in wheat production declined from 1991 to 2006 but increased again in 2011. The area producing oats has steadily increased over the same period but barley has been in steady decline, much like wheat, with a small increase noted in 2011. Canola was very popular in 1991, dropped between 1996 and 2006 and climbed again in 2011. Forage seed production has an extensive history in the Peace.

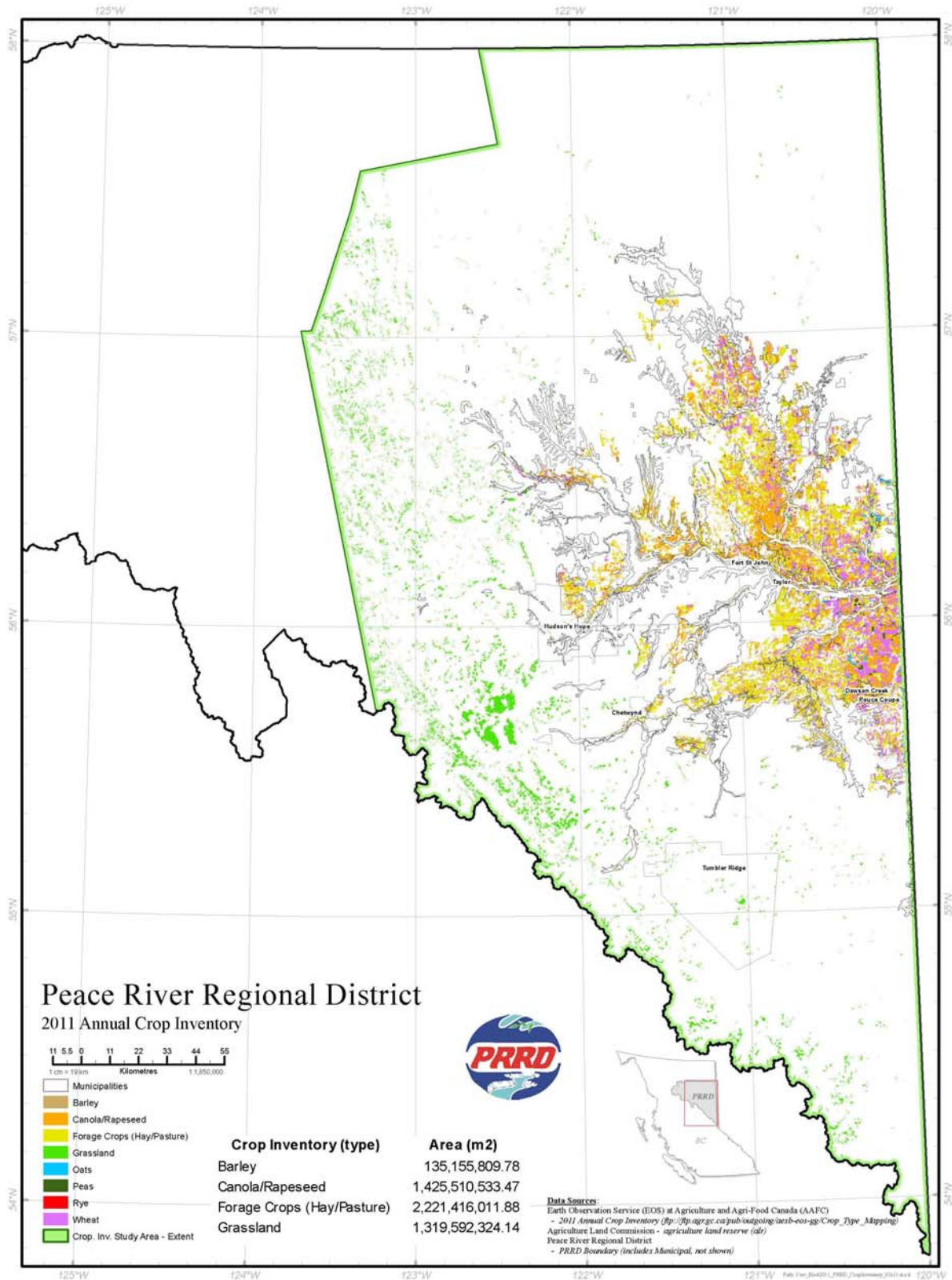
The Peace Region Forage Seed Association was formed in 1995 with the intent to develop and enhance forage seed production in the area. As noted in Figure 9, forage seed production reached its highest point in 2001 in terms of acreage involved. The production of forage seed in the PRRD contributes in an important way to grass and legume production in both Alberta and

BC. Dry field peas are also noted in Figure 9 because the land for their production has been increasing. It is expected that market conditions for these various crops has influenced the production changes.

The location of the various main crops grown in the PRRD is identified in Figure 10.

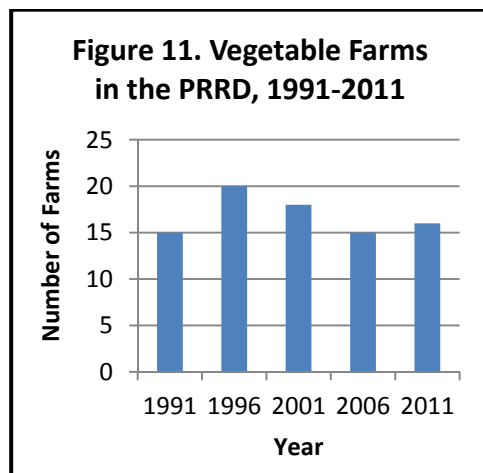
The main crops tend to be grown throughout the ALR with concentrations of one crop occurring, as might be expected, in some areas, likely due to favourable growing conditions for that crop or producer decisions based on an analysis of potential favourable markets. Crops are also reported only for 2011 but most crops are in multi-crop rotation and the amount of crop grown will vary from year to year. Figure 10 also reports considerable grassland north and west of Pine Valley and Pine Pass. These are forestry cut blocks likely regrowing in grass or shrubs. It should be noted that annual crop inventory data reported in the map may not fully match Census of Agriculture data due to different reporting methods and the time frame of data collection.

**Figure 10. Main Crops Grown in the PRRD**



## Vegetable Production

In 2011, 16 farms in the Regional District were involved in vegetable production, as seen in Figure 11. With the exception of an increase in 1996 and drop again in 2001,

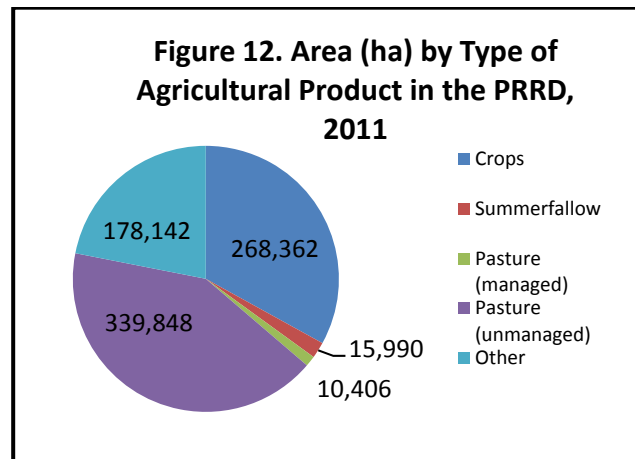


Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.10 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

the number of farms growing vegetables has remained relatively stable between 1991 and 2011. The growing season for vegetables is short and the risk of early frost may make growing vegetables more problematic for producers. However, there is anecdotal evidence suggesting a growing demand for local vegetables in the region. Evidence related to climate changes suggests increasing daylight and warmer temperatures for the region which could contribute to an increase in vegetable production in the future.

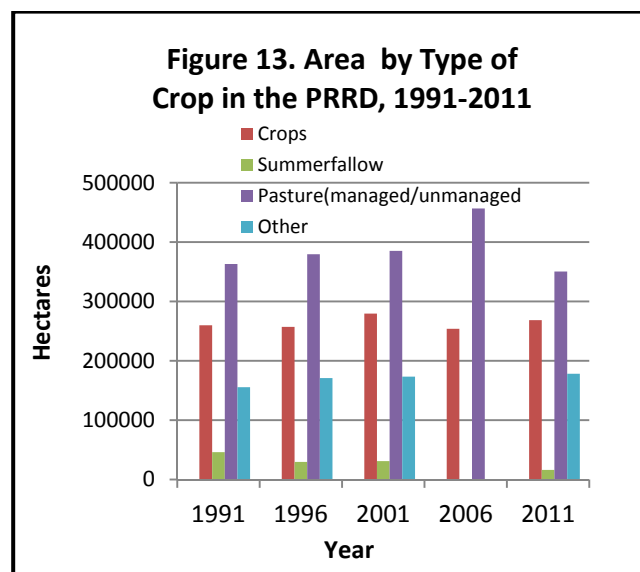
## Summer Fallow and Pasture

As previously noted, much of the PRRD agricultural land is devoted to seven main



Source: 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

crops. However, there are also large amounts of land in summer fallow or in pasture, most pasture land being unmanaged. Figure 12 illustrates the number of hectares in crops contrasted with that in managed and unmanaged pasture. There are more hectares dedicated to pasture than to the main crops. The somewhat large “other” category includes wetlands, woodlands, Christmas trees, and all other land uses.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.7 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture

As noted in Figure 13, the relative position of pasture to crops has not changed from 1991 to 2011 but pasture use declined from 2006 to 2011 whereas crop use modestly increased during that time period.

## Nursery, Sod and Christmas Trees

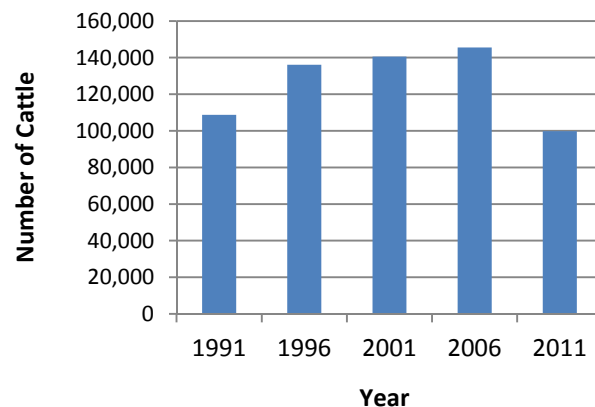
In 2011, there were 18 farms producing nursery products, sod, and Christmas trees which is an increase from the six farms doing so in 1991. Figure 14 provides the details. It is expected most of the growers of these products sell their output in local markets.

## Livestock

Almost 23% of all beef cattle in BC were in the PRRD in 2006 but numbers have since declined. From 1991 to 2006, as shown in

Figure 15, the number of cattle increased from almost 109 thousand to almost 146 thousand head. In 2011, there were approximately 100,000 head of cattle, a

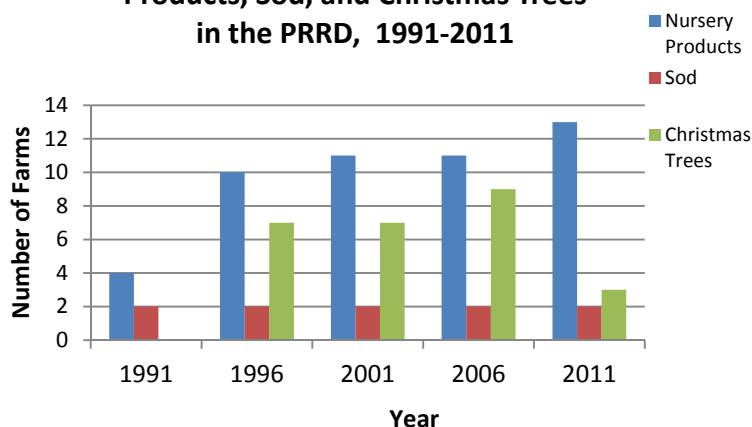
**Figure 15. Cattle in the PRRD, 1991-2011**



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.11 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

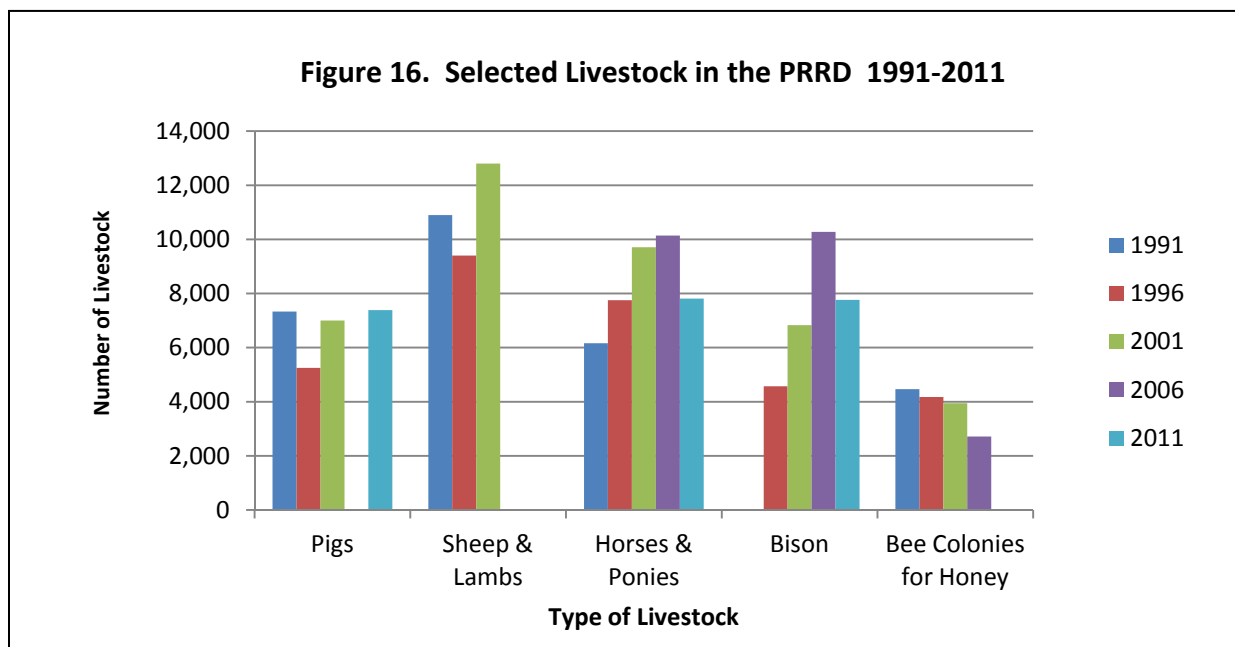
decline of about 9% from 1991. The beef cattle business lately has been unusually challenging for ranchers and many have reduced their cattle holdings. The combined impact of finding BSE<sup>5</sup> in cattle and subsequent export ban, the use of feed grain for biofuel that increased grain prices for producers and the impact of drought causing increased costs for cattle over-wintering have all been factors in the decline in cattle numbers.

**Figure 14. Farms Producing Nursery Products, Sod, and Christmas Trees in the PRRD, 1991-2011**



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.11 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture

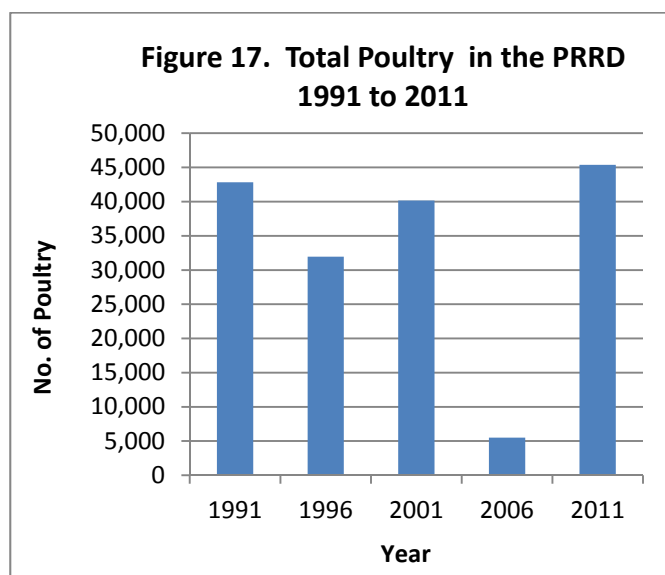
<sup>5</sup> Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.11 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

Other important livestock in the Regional District are poultry, sheep and lambs, horses, bison and bees. As noted in Figure 16, the number of pigs in the Regional District has held steady at about 8,000 but no data was reported for 2006. The number of bison is almost as large as the number of pigs and, in 2006, actually exceeded pig numbers and equalled that for horses and ponies. In 2011, there were over 7,500 bison, almost 40% more than in 1991. The number of sheep and lambs was not reported in 2006 and 2011, but the numbers had increased between 1991 and 2001.

Figure 17 shows the number of poultry (including chickens, chickens for egg production, turkeys and other poultry) has varied over the 20-year time period, but has increased by 5% between 1991 and



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.11 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

2011. There was a major decline in poultry numbers in 2006.

Bee colonies in the PRRD are in decline in the PRRD and the extent of the decline may

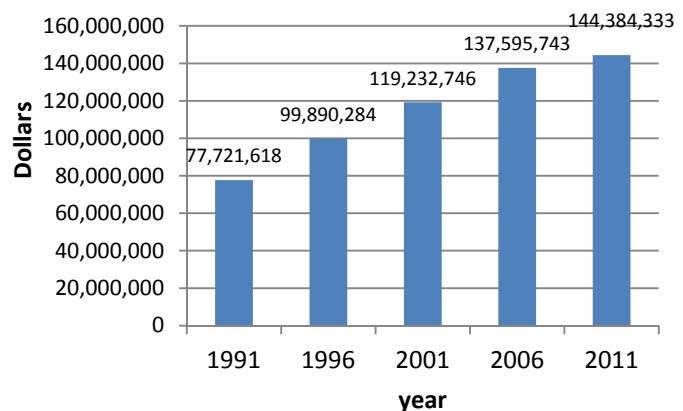
not be fully evident by the data presented in Figure 16. According to the BCMA, in the 1970s the Peace region had about 1 % of total BC beekeepers, about 10 % of total BC honey producing colonies, and produced about 30 % of the BC total honey crop. Since the late 1980s, the number of honey producing colonies has decreased by over 90 %, from 20,000 to less than 2000 colonies.<sup>6</sup> Although the value of crop pollination by bees may be 10 times more important than honey production, the PRRD does not have fruit, berry or vegetable crops that are dependent on bees for pollination. Climate changes that may result in warmer temperatures in the Peace, coupled with longer days already there could increase the potential for honey production.

## Gross Farm Receipts and Operating Expenses

Data in Figure 18 illustrate gross farm receipts have increased in the PRRD between 1991 and 2011. With no adjustment for inflation, gross farm receipts in the PRRD have increased from about \$80 million in 1991 to more than \$140 million in 2011. Operating expenses are presented in Figure 19. Operating expenses include the purchase of fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and other plants, livestock, veterinary services, custom and contract work, repairs and maintenance, rentals and leasing, and farm

<sup>6</sup> Data provided by Paul Van Westendorp, BCMA Provincial Apiarist.

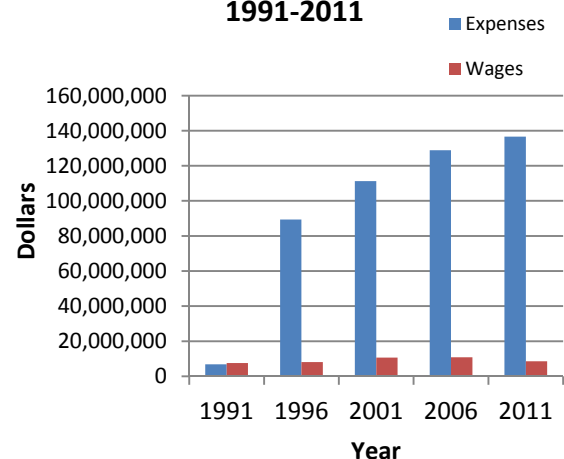
**Figure 18 . Gross Farm Receipts in the PRRD, 1991 to 2011**



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.13 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

interest expenses but exclude wages. In 1991, wages and operating expenses were reported as being essentially the same, likely an anomaly in the reporting process, and since 1996, operating expenses increased relative to wages.

**Figure 19. Total Farm Operating Expenses and Wages in the PRRD, 1991-2011**

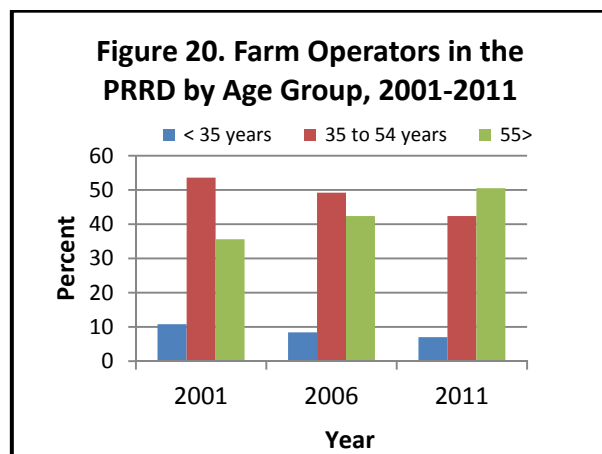


Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.14 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.



## Age of Farm Operators

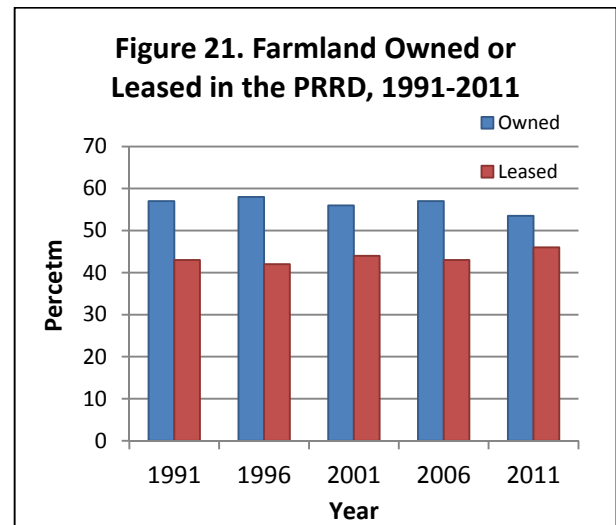
Data in Figure 20 indicate there are fewer younger farm operators (less than 35 years of age) and those 55 years of age and older are increasing relative to the other age ranges. The main concern of the industry, in terms of succession, is the declining number of young people entering the industry. The average age of farm operators is increasing in the Peace River Regional District, consistent with the situation in other parts of British Columbia. In 2011, the average age of farm operators was 54.6 years, compared to 55.7 in BC.



Source: Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture 2001, 2006, 2011.

## Farm Tenure

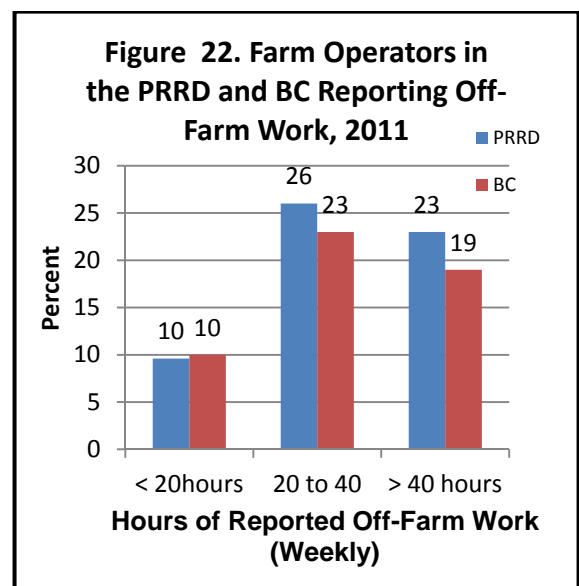
As illustrated in Figure 21, 54% of all agricultural land in the PRRD in 2011 was owned. The percentage of land owned vs leased has been relatively stable over the 20-year period of 1991 to 2011.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. *Peace River Regional District Agricultural Overview*. July 2008, p.6 and 2011 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture.

## Hours of Off-Farm Work

Despite having larger operations, producers in the Peace River Regional District are more likely than BC producers elsewhere to be working off the farm. According to the most recent agricultural census, 59% of all



Source: Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture 2001, 2006, 2011.

PRRD producers worked off the farm, compared to 52% in BC. And, as indicated in Figure 22, 23% did more than 40 hours of off-farm work on a weekly basis. In the PRRD, there is considerable oil and gas activity and many producers may be taking advantage of the opportunities for supplementing their incomes with well-paying jobs off the farm.

## The Current Context

This section provides information on agricultural capability in the Regional District. It also includes an outline of the current legislative framework within which the Regional Agricultural Plan must be developed. The legislative framework provides descriptions of relevant legislation at the national, provincial and local levels.

### Agricultural Capability

Agricultural capability is a function of soil characteristics and climate. Soil provides the nutrients for plant growth and climate provides the heat units and water. All are needed for agricultural production.

### Soil and Land Classes

The area now known as the Peace River Regional District was glaciated by both the Cordilleran and the Keewatin ice sheets

from the west and north east, impacting the underlying sandstone and shales. Winter conditions restricted soil formation processes and winter frosts penetrate deeply into many soils. The most common soils are Grey Luvisols developed under forest vegetation on loamy to clay glacial till, Luvic Gleysol, Regosol, Eutric Brunisol, Solod, and Mesisol. Most of the area's soils are prone to water erosion and some are acidic.<sup>7</sup>

Luvisolic soils typically are found in forested areas where the parent materials contain large amounts of clay. The Grey Luvisol soils tend to have a gentle to strongly rolling topography on the uplands and gentle slopes on the plains.<sup>8</sup> The Luvic Gleysol soils are found on the wetter margins of the Grey Luvisol landscape. These soils generally lack organic matter and other nutrients and can be moderately acidic. Poor natural drainage is common.<sup>9</sup>

The Regosol soils are the result of relatively recent flooding of the floodplain. These soils can be very agriculturally productive.<sup>10</sup> The Eutric Brunisol soils occur on glacial deposits on the terraces of rivers. They have a coarse texture with low water holding capacity. These soils can support forage crops quite well. The Solod soils are

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<sup>7</sup> B.C. Agriculture & Food. *Grain & Oilseed Production: Peace Region: Snapshot Report*, Climate Action Initiative, BC Agriculture Climate Change Adaptation Risk + Opportunity Assessment Series. March 2012, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/taxa/cssc3/chpt08.html>

<sup>9</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/taxa/cssc3/chpt08.html>

<sup>10</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/taxa/cssc3/chpt08.html>



one of the soils that are found in the Peace River lowlands and only in a very few locations.<sup>11</sup> The vegetation cover is usually trembling aspen, willow, rose, saskatoon and grasses.

The Mesisol is a peat soil that is moderately decomposed, overlaying sands, wilts or clay soils. It is strongly acidic and low in nutrients.<sup>12</sup>

The Canada Land Inventory uses seven capability classifications for agriculture, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Canada Land Inventory Classifications**

Capability Class	Description
1	Optimum potential, full range of crops
2	Wide range of crops, some restrictions
3	Wide range under good management
4	Restricted range, several limitations
5	Perennial forage crops, severe limitations
6	Natural rangeland, no cultivation
7	No agricultural capability

Class One to Class Four land is considered to be best suited for productive crop-growing agriculture. Land classified Five to Seven is generally considered to be difficult for most

agricultural crops and is often used for agro-forestry or as pasture for cattle production. However, it is important to note that some agricultural practices, such as cattle grazing, that is popular in the Peace, may be quite suitable and appropriate for land that may have limitations for certain other crops such as vegetables, for example. Class One lands are generally located along the Peace River and account for only .3 % of the total Agricultural Land Reserve.

Approximately 8% of the ALR is Class Two land. These lands are located north of Clayhurst, south of Dawson Creek, east to the B.C./Alberta border and west to as far as Valley View, Kilkerran and South Dawson. Another band of Class two land is located north of the Peace River near Cecil Lake, Flatrock, Rose Prairie, Montney and Charlie Lake. Other areas of Class two land are in the area of Halfway Ranch and at various locations along the Peace River west of Bear Flat.

Class Three and Class Four lands included in the ALR are located throughout the Regional District, and account for 62 % of the ALR.

Within the PRRD, although most of the agricultural land in Class One to Class Four does lie within the ALR, it is important to note there is land within all of these four classes lying outside of the ALR. This is presented in Figures 23 and 24.

<sup>11</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/taxa/cssc3/chpt08.html>

<sup>12</sup> Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/taxa/cssc3/chpt08.html>

**Figure 23. Land Classifications 1-4 in the PRRD**

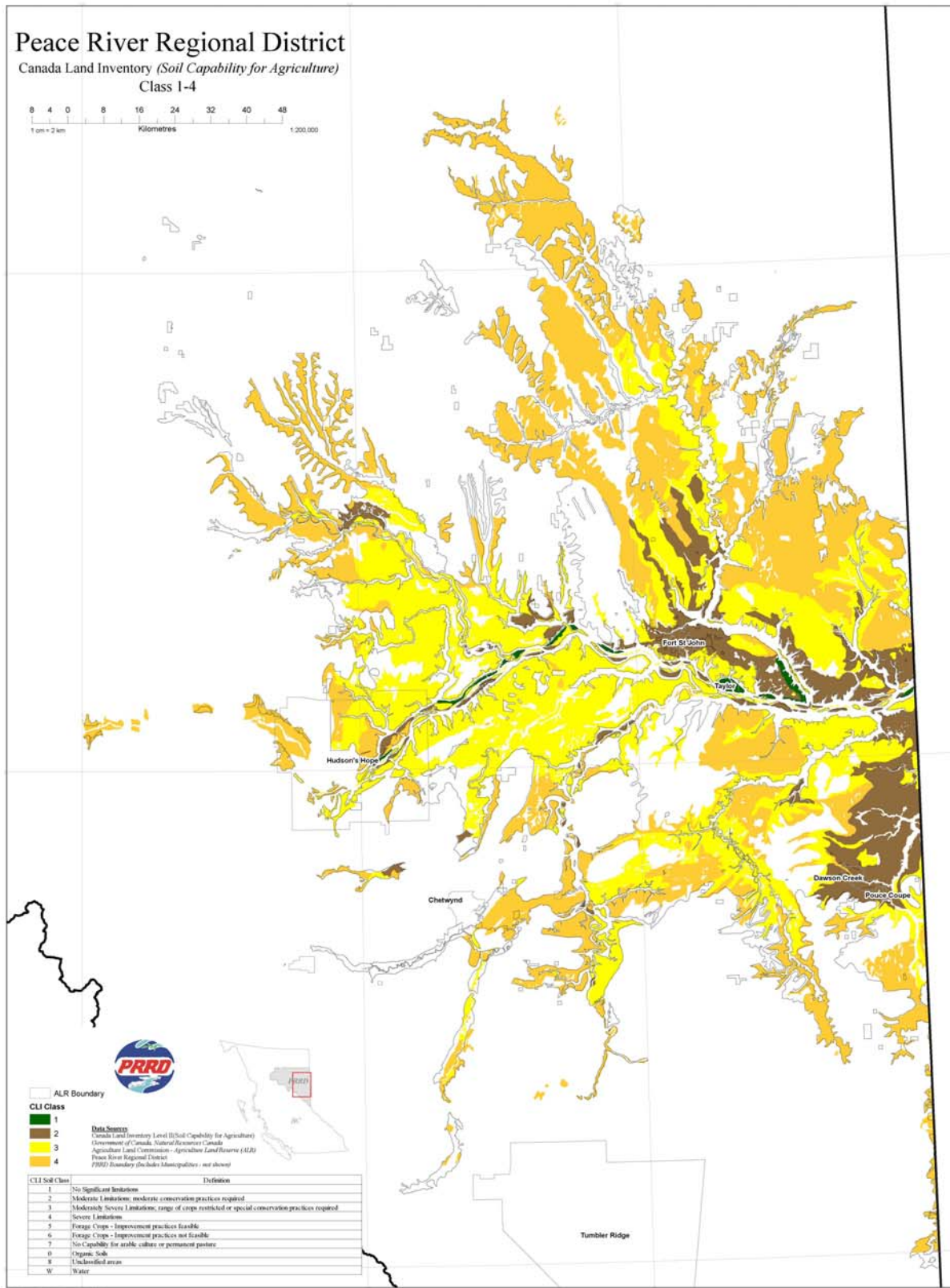
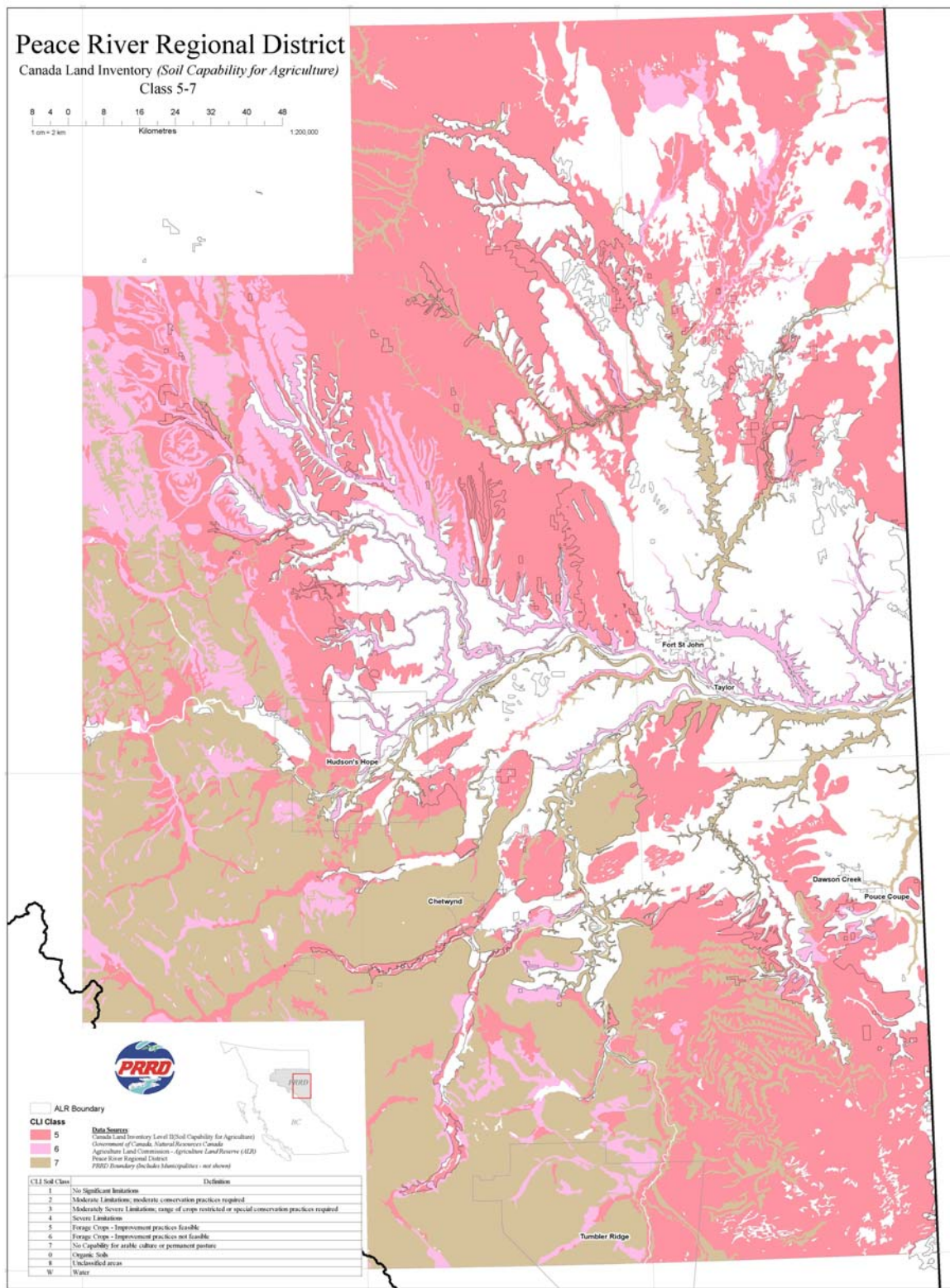


Figure 24. Land Classifications 5-7 in the PRRD



As data in Table 3 indicate, of the total PRRD land in Class One, although most (82%) is within the ALR, almost one-fifth (18%) does not lie within the boundaries of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

**Table 3. Soil Classifications for Agriculture in the PRRD**

Land Classes	Total Land in the PRRD\Ha	Percent ALR	Percent not ALR
Class 1	5,110	82	18
Class 2	120,908	90	10
Class 3	411,764	90	10
Class 4	492,952	88	12

Source: Agriculture and Agrifood Canada  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/nsdb/cli/classdesc.html>

For land classes Two, Three and Four, the percentage within the ALR for each class is higher with classes Two and Three being 90% within the ALR and 88% of Class Four land being within the ALR.

As expected, there are pockets of land within the ALR that lie in classes Five, Six, or Seven. These land classes present more difficulty for agriculture but may be used very effectively as rangeland for cattle production. However, as visually presented in Figure 24 above, most of the land in classes 5, 6 and 7 does not lie within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

## Weather and Climate

Agricultural producers spend a lot of their time watching and worrying about the weather. Weather occurs on a daily basis with fluctuations from one year to the next

that may lead to bumper crops, or significant crop losses.

Climate, however, is different from weather. Climate refers to long-term trends, patterns and averages over time. In the Peace Region, as with other parts of the province and the World, climate change is occurring. While producers are accustomed to adjusting to weather fluctuations, it is expected the scope and scale of climate changes in the Peace will exceed previous expectations and will impact agriculture in some important ways. Those impacts, over the longer term, are expected to be increasing dry and drought conditions, increasing precipitation but changing precipitation patterns, increasing weather variability and extremes, and increasing temperatures, growing degree days, and growing season length. It is anticipated that climate changes in the future may also increase the magnitude, frequency and intensity of extreme events affecting temperature and rainfall. Cold extremes may occur less frequently. It is also expected that Peace River flows may also increase slightly. With changes to the snowpack, runoff peaks may occur earlier in the season with lower discharge later in the summer.<sup>13</sup>

The climate of the PRRD is classified as “continental” as most of the moist Pacific air has been lost before it reaches this area. However, the Peace River Valley does receive pockets of warm coastal air that

<sup>13</sup> Peace Region: BC Agriculture and Climate Change, July 2013, Page 7



flow through the Rocky Mountains into the valley. This moderates the climate, giving the area a longer growing season.<sup>14</sup> The average annual precipitation in the Peace Region varies between 350 (approximately 14") and 500 mm (approximately 20 in). High rates of evapo-transpiration often create water deficits and dry soils in late summer. It is uncertain moisture availability that is defined as the primary limiting factor for much of the agricultural land in the Peace River Valley.<sup>15</sup>

One of the main reasons for the favourability of the Peace River Valley's climate is that temperatures are higher in the valley than on the surrounding plateaux. The maximum growing season temperature difference between the valley and the plateau is 2.3 °C. The warmer valley temperatures contribute to a longer frost-free period - often three weeks longer and sometimes more than six weeks longer than the surrounding plateau. Yields can also be enhanced as warmer temperatures contribute to warmer soils. Within the valley, temperatures and frost-free periods decrease at successively higher elevations. Therefore, the lowest elevations in the valley are often able to produce the highest yields.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> University of Victoria. *Hydrologic Impacts of Climate Change on B.C. Water Resources*. Summary Report for the Campbell, Columbia and Peace River Watersheds. Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium. July 2011, p.2.

<sup>15</sup> Crawford, Erica et al. *Grain & Oilseed Production: Peace Region: Snapshot Report*, Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative. March 2012, pp. 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Chillborne Environmental. *An Overview of the Peace River Valley's Natural and Cultural Values*. Written for West Moberly First Nations and the Peace Valley Environment Association. July 2009, p. 41.

The growing season is approximately 100 to 110 days of frost-free period. The very long days make up the equivalent of several days of growth over the growing season and the dry mid-summer period promotes rapid grain ripening and maturity.<sup>17</sup> As climate change continues, it is expected that the Peace Region growing season will continue to increase.

Weather stations are located at Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, and Fort St. John. Some temperature variations are noted among the three weather stations, mainly in average daily temperatures and moisture levels.

In Chetwynd, temperatures vary from -13° to 23°. The warm season lasts from May 22 to September 9 with an average daily high temperature above 17° C. The cold season lasts from November 16 to February 27 with an average daily high temperature of -0°C.

In Dawson Creek, the temperature typically varies from -19°C to 23°C and is rarely below -33°C or above 28°C. On average, Dawson Creek has 482 mm (approximately 19") of precipitation per year. The warm season lasts from May 18 to September 16 with an average daily high above 16°C. From May to September, the average precipitation is 309.4 mm (12.1") or 61.8 mm (2.4") per month. The cold season lasts

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<sup>17</sup> Chillborne Environmental. *An Overview of the Peace River Valley's Natural and Cultural Values*. Written for West Moberly First Nations and the Peace Valley Environment Association. July 2009.

from November 23 to February 25 with an average daily high temperature below -3°C. In the cold season, there is a 40% chance of precipitation during a given day, most often in the form of light snow, moderate snow or light rain.

The temperature at the Fort St. John weather station varies from -18°C to 22°C and is rarely below -31°C or above 28°C. Fort St. John has 514 mm (20.3") of precipitation yearly. The warm season lasts from May 18 to September 11 with an average daily high above 15°C. During the warm season, there is an 18% chance that precipitation will occur at some time during a given day, most often light rain or thunderstorms. From May to September, the average precipitation is 282.7 mm or 56.6 mm per month. The cold season has an average daily high of -4°C. In the cold season, there is a 20% chance of precipitation during a given day, most often in the form of light or moderate snow.

## **Selected Relevant Legislation**

This section presents information about legislation at the national, provincial, and regional levels that will have an impact on the Regional Agricultural Plan.

### **The National Agricultural Policy Framework**

*Growing Forward 2*, the most recent national agricultural policy agreement, lays the groundwork for coordinated federal-provincial-territorial action over five years

from 2013. It will include three main initiatives to:

- commercialize new products and technologies
- help the industry with assurance systems such as food safety and traceability and address achieving new markets and promotional activities
- strengthen agriculture's adaptation and profitability in domestic and global markets.

*Growing Forward 2* will maintain a suite of business risk management programs designed to help producers withstand severe market volatility and disasters.

### **Provincial Agricultural Policy**

In 2008, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (now the BC Ministry of Agriculture) released *Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families*, a new Agriculture Plan for the province. The Agriculture Plan contains 23 strategies within five overarching themes. The five themes are:

1. producing local food in a changing world
2. meeting environmental and climate challenges
3. building innovative and profitable family farm businesses
4. building First Nations agricultural capacity
5. bridging the urban/agriculture divide.

On a local level, the Ministry of Agriculture has an office in Dawson Creek and one in Fort St John providing a range of programs

and services to area agricultural producers. BCMA staff provides expertise in agricultural renewal, strengthening agricultural production, and various land planning initiatives. Ministry staff advocate for agriculture and for individual producers. They liaise with other Ministry and federal government staff on health and quarantine issues, slaughter waste regulation, and meat inspection. Staff monitors application of provincial legislation that affects agricultural production such as the *Farm Practices Protection Act* and others. They also support producers with various funding assistance programs.

#### *Agricultural Land Commission Act*

In 1973, the provincial government approved the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* establishing a special land use zone, the Agricultural Land Reserve, to protect land with agricultural potential in the province. The ALR encompasses approximately five percent of the province land base and 11% of the land in the Peace River Regional District.

The *Agricultural Land Commission Act* is implemented through regulations related to the *Act* and through the activities of the Agricultural Land Commission, an independent provincial agency. The *Agricultural Land Commission Act* takes precedence over, but does not replace other legislation and bylaws that may apply to the land. Local and regional governments, as well as other provincial agencies, are expected to plan in

accordance with the provincial policy of preserving agricultural land.

Agriculture is expected to be the priority use within the ALR. Agriculture is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled by the legislation and regulations. There are specific requirements related to soil removal and placement of fill, for example. The regulations also define procedures for submitting applications for inclusion or removal of land from the ALR, identifying filing requirements and the roles of local governments and the Agricultural Land Commission. Land in the ALR is subject to provincial regulation whether private or Crown.

#### *Climate Action Plan*

In 2008, the provincial government initiated its *Climate Action Plan* with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33% by 2020 and by 80% by 2050. Included in the Plan is focus on seven sectors having important environmental impacts, one of which is agriculture. The objective for the agricultural sector is to “...work with the agricultural industry on strategies that may include digesters to capture methane from manure, improved fertilizer application, community biogas digestion/electricity generation projects, research on biomass fuel, green city farms and encouraging local purchase of agricultural products.” An adaptation strategy for addressing climate issues in the Peace Region has recently been completed and is referenced in other sections of this report.

### *Farm Practices Protection Act*

The *Farm Practices Protection Act* applies to farmers who operate in the Agricultural Land Reserve or in other areas where farming is permitted by local zoning bylaws. When producers operate using “normal farm practices,” the Act protects the producer against nuisance actions, court injunctions, or specific nuisance bylaws related to the operation of the agricultural business.

Established by the *Farm Practices Protection Act*, the Farm Industry Review Board is the tribunal that considers complaints from persons aggrieved by odour, noise, dust, or other disturbances resulting from agricultural operations, and encourages settlement of the complaints.

### *Land Title Act*

The *Land Title Act* authorizes the approving officer of the Regional District the power to assess potential impacts of proposed subdivisions on agricultural land. Before subdivision approval is given, the approving officer may require adequate buffering of agricultural land from the subdivision, or the removal of unnecessary roads directed to the Agricultural Land Reserve, to ensure no unreasonable interference with agricultural operations.

### *Livestock Act*

The *Livestock Act* permits establishment of livestock districts where, with minor exceptions, livestock may run at large within the boundaries of the Regional

District. It permits the establishment of pound districts to allow keepers, peace officers and others to capture animals at large within a specified area. The Act also allows for the sale of unclaimed impounded animals and the reimbursement of the keeper. Also, the Act permits the establishment of Bull Control areas which are under the direction of a Bull Control Committee that determines the number, breed, breeding, quality, and age of bulls allowed running at large within the area.

### *BC Water Sustainability Act*

The *BC Water Sustainability Act*, currently receiving further public input, will replace the *BC Water Act* which has been in effect since 1909 and is understood to no longer address current water issues adequately, such as groundwater use. The *BC Water Sustainability Act* is expected to:

- Protect stream health and aquatic environments
- Consider water in land use decisions
- Regulate and protect groundwater
- Regulate water use during times of scarcity
- Improve security, water use efficiency and conservation
- Measure and report large-scale water use
- Provide for a range of governance approaches.



### *Local Government Act*

The *Local Government Act* provides the legislative framework for local governments. Under the Act, certain provisions relate to agriculture, such as those covering community planning, zoning, nuisance regulations, the removal and deposit of soil, weed and pest control, and water use and drainage. Particular sections of the Act address planning for agriculture. There may be policy statements in an *Official Community Plan* that respect the maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area or in an area designated for agricultural use. Also, land use bylaws adopted by a local government are expected to recognize specific planning standards for agricultural operations.

Regional districts provide a government for unincorporated areas and a forum for inter-municipal cooperation. This forum, while set up through the *Local Government Act*, proceeds through voluntary agreements with considerable flexibility, especially with the ability of each regional district to develop its own approaches to the delivery of services for different areas within it.

### *Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy*

The *BC Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy* was completed in 2004 with a goal to enhance the licensed meat processing capacity in British Columbia.

The *BC Meat Inspection Regulation* came into effect in September, 2007, after a three-year transition period. The Regulation requires that all meat for sale for human

consumption come from a licensed slaughter facility and all licensed facilities must meet new requirements for handling waste and meat inspection. These requirements are considerably more stringent and more costly in terms of upgrades and new builds, with the result that some areas have lost access to slaughter services. A transition program, developed to assist meat processors to meet the new standards, expired in 2009.

### *Trespass Act*

The *Trespass Act* provides for penalties for persons trespassing on enclosed land. The Act defines "enclosed land" and "lawful fence" and places the onus on the owner of the land to ensure fencing is in place and legible and visible signs are posted to prohibit trespassing on the owner's land.

## **Local Government Legislation**

### *Official Community Plans*

The Peace River Regional District currently operates with five Official Community Plans:

- Peace River Regional District *Rural Official Community Plan* By-law No. 1940, 2011
- *North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan* – Peace River District Bylaw No. 1870, 2009
- Peace River Regional District – *West Peace Official Community Plan* Bylaw No. 1086, 1997

- Peace River Liard Regional District – *Dawson Creek Rural Area Official Community Plan* Bylaw No. 477, 1986
- Peace River Regional District – *South Peace Fringe Area – Official Community Plan* Bylaw No. 2048 (which will replace Bylaw No. 477 later in 2013)

There is considerable support for agriculture identified in the plans. In the *Rural Official Community Plan*, for example, numerous goals relate to agriculture, including:

- land use that is supportive of the agricultural community and its industry
- protection of the rural lifestyle which provides residents with rural characteristics such as peace, privacy, friendliness, access to community facilities, the enjoyment of open space, and the quiet enjoyment of the land – all of which contribute to a desirable rural way-of-life
- effective provision of local and regional government services to the rural area
- a supportive and respectful relationship with provincial government ministries and agencies
- economic opportunities that benefit residents and land-owners
- recognition of surface and ground water sources as critical, life-sustaining resources and use of best practices in preserving, restoring, and protecting watershed areas
- protection of development from hazardous environmental features

- provision of outdoor recreation opportunities
- living sustainably with the natural environment
- promotion and protection of valued historical and cultural features
- achieving reductions in targets for greenhouse gas emissions.

The *Official Community Plan* documents all support agriculture as a primary industry in the Regional District.

### *Zoning Bylaws*

The Peace River Regional District currently operates with four Zoning Bylaws:

- Peace River Liard Regional District – *Chetwynd Rural Area Zoning Bylaw* No 506, 1989 (consolidated December 1993)
- Peace River Liard Regional District – *Dawson Creek Rural Area Zoning Bylaw* No. 479, 1986
- Zoning Bylaw No. 1000, 1996
- Peace River Regional District *Zoning Bylaw* No. 1343, 2001

These documents provide definitions and identify acceptable land uses for land zoned for agriculture.

In addition to the legislation, there are a number of active agricultural organizations in the PRRD that have an influence on agriculture. Organizations such as the BC Grain Producers Association, the BC Forage Producers Association, the BC Peace River

Regional Cattlemen's Association and the Peace River Forage Seed Association are active in the region.

## The Future

This section explores current issues impacting agriculture in the PRRD, identifies suggestions for the benefit and expansion of agriculture, and presents a vision for the future and key strategy areas to achieve the vision. It is based on:

- terms of reference for a Regional Agricultural Plan developed by the Agricultural Advisory Committee and supported by the Regional Board
- workshop/meetings with the Agricultural Advisory Committee on December 18, 2012 and April 16, 2013
- telephone interviews completed with 37 stakeholders throughout the Regional District
- twelve consultation meetings involving 246 participants completed in April and May, 2013
- additional input provided by email
- a review of selected background documents including:
  - ✓ Peace River Regional District Rural *Official Community Plan* By-law No. 1940, 2011
  - ✓ *North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan* – Peace River District Bylaw No. 1870, 2009
  - ✓ Peace River Regional District – *West Peace Official Community Plan* Bylaw No. 1086, 1997

- ✓ Peace River Liard Regional District – *Dawson Creek Rural Area Official Community Plan* Bylaw No. 477, 1986
- ✓ Peace River Regional District – *South Peace Fringe Area – Official Community Plan* Bylaw No. (not adopted as yet), 2011
- ✓ Peace River Liard Regional District – *Chetwynd Rural Area Zoning Bylaw* No 506, 1989 (consolidated December 1993)
- ✓ Peace River Liard Regional District – *Dawson Creek Rural Area Zoning Bylaw* No. 479, 1986
- ✓ Peace River Regional District *Zoning Bylaw* No. 1000, 1996
- ✓ Peace River Regional District *Zoning Bylaw* No. 1343, 2001

## Main Issues

Following are the main issues affecting agriculture in the PRRD:

- producer ability to compete with other jurisdictions is affected by the BC carbon tax, higher costs for inputs in the Peace and inadequate infrastructure available such as roads and rail service and processing centres
- producer ability to find appropriate additional land such as acquiring needed Crown land for pasturing or other agricultural uses, selected removal of farmland from agricultural production, and increasing amounts of foreign or non-resident land ownership for rural estates results in land out of

production or not available to local producers for purchase, rent or lease

- the presence of the oil and gas industry is having an impact on agriculture by:
  - ✓ making it more difficult for agricultural producers to get labour and other inputs at reasonable cost
  - ✓ affecting agricultural production by having wells on agricultural land
  - ✓ affecting agricultural production with the cumulative, contributing effect of additional weeds and impact on bio-security
  - ✓ affecting “sense of community” in rural areas by contributing to fewer people in agriculture and creating additional noise, traffic, and dust and uncertainty for the future of agriculture including a capacity to plan for the future when faced with a fast-moving oil and gas industry
  - ✓ affecting recruitment of young people to agriculture when higher paying alternatives are available in oil and gas
  - ✓ affecting infrastructure by putting additional pressure on roads, railways (reduced capacity for agriculture), the power grid and damaging power and telephone lines
  - ✓ affecting the future of the area due to unknown impact of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) as a means of gas removal
  - ✓ creating concerns related to the removal of pipelines and other infrastructure when use is

completed and the pipelines are abandoned.

- agriculture does not have appropriate levels of decision-maker support and the decline in producer numbers has resulted in limited incentives for producers when compared to other industries, inattention paid to agricultural issues at policy decision-making levels and rules and “red tape” that are not “producer friendly”
- regulations from the Agricultural Land Commission and evolution away from the original four pillars (*The Farm Income Assurance Act, The Agricultural Credit Act, The Farm Product Industry Act and the Agricultural Land Development Act*) when the ALCA was introduced, make it difficult for producers to expand their businesses or use their existing land in a “reasonable manner”
- producer ability to expand and grow the agricultural industry has been affected by reduced levels of available education, less research related to agricultural issues, and reduced extension services to assist producers with staying current on agricultural practices
- less predictable weather patterns and increased numbers of extreme weather events leave producers more vulnerable to crop damage, risk of new pests, increasing levels of disease and weeds and decline in honeybee populations, and there are insufficient risk management programs to support producers facing these additional risks

- water availability and assurance of supply is a concern for the agricultural industry due to peak water demand in the growing season (when other water demands may also be higher) and the need for water as a fundamental requirement for agricultural production.

## Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles have been identified. They are designed to guide the development of the Regional Agricultural Plan. The Plan will:

- contain a vision for the future of agriculture that will include a permanent role for agriculture as an essential component of the physical, ecological, social, and economic well being of the Regional District
- contain policy and governance items and recommendations for the future development of community plans and a regional growth strategy
- identify changes in business management which could be implemented by producers or agricultural organizations
- identify strategies to enhance agriculture in the context of competition with other land uses such as oil and gas and forestry and mining
- address current issues with policies and recommendations to ensure the best possible future for agriculture
- identify agricultural business practices that will help the industry to flourish.

## Vision for the Future

Based on a review of the suggestions for the Regional Agricultural Plan, and with consideration for the guiding principles, the following vision for the future of agriculture in the Peace River Regional District emerged:

***The Peace River Regional District supports and promotes a vibrant agricultural community and protection of agricultural land for a sustainable and profitable agricultural industry.***

## Key Strategy Areas

In order to achieve the vision for the future of agriculture, the following four main strategies were identified:

1. Providing A Welcoming Business Environment
2. Providing Necessary Services and Infrastructure
3. Supporting A Secure Agricultural Land Base
4. Supporting Progressive Producer Management Practices.

Table 2: New Table on Policies and Actions for the Regional Agricultural Plan

Note: yellow highlights are new additions not in old table

Red text are additions as of Sept 16 AAC meeting

1. Resources pg 1-7 (Land pg 1, Water pg 4, PRRD 6)
2. Production pg 8-9
3. Processing pg 9

4. Marketing pg 10
5. Transportation pg 11
6. Communication pg 12 -15
- Acronyms pg 16

Timeframe

1 - 1yr

2

3

4 – 4 yr

Importance

A - Most

B

C

D - Least

## Resources

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Land					
Establish Good Neighbour Policy (A spirit of Shared responsibilities)	1. Develop education and awareness around Establishing a Good Neighbour	PRRD, Municipalities, Ag community, Service and Development Industry, BCMA	2(3) 4(1)	A(3) D(1)	
	2. Adherence to policies like "Right to Farm" coupled with appropriate zoning, Normal Farm Practices	PRRD, Municipalities, Ag community, Service and Development Industry, BCMA	1(6) 2(1)	A(5) B (1)	
Support the protection of agricultural land, both within and outside of the ALR, for agricultural purposes (AAC, BCMA, ALC)	1. Continue to refer and review as needed to existing policy OCP's		1(6)	A(6)	
Seek advice from the Agricultural Advisory Committee for	2. Develop policy with AAC around ALR referrals	PRRD, AAC	1(6)	A(6)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
applications received by the PRRD for removal, boundary adjustment, sub-division or non-agricultural use on land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (AAC)	3. Impact Guideline to use when reviewing applications				
Support producers seeking access to Crown Land for agricultural uses.	1. Advocate with interested producer associations where appropriate to clarify specific issues restricting producer access to Crown land	PRRD, AAC, Other agricultural organizations, BCMA, FLNRO, ALC, FN	2(5)	B(5)	
	2. Gather more information for AAC to consider the appropriateness of direct sale of Crown lands to producers.	AAC	2(3) 4(1)	B(2) C(1) D(1)	
	3. Encourage the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to timely process applications for new opportunities for grazing licenses in the Peace River Regional District	PRRD FLNRO	1(3) 2(1)	A(3) B(1)	
Support strategies for edge planning in higher urban-populated areas of the PRRD between Agricultural Land and non-agriculture use land (AAC, BCMA, ALC)	1. Identify all areas at the interface of urban/rural uses where conflict may occur <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prepare information about appropriate edge planning techniques and standards</li> <li>b. Provide information to affected agricultural land owners and local governments</li> <li>c. Encourage local governments to follow through with agreements on buffer zones</li> <li>d. Utilize Zoning, Land Use</li> </ul>	PRRD, Municipality Land Owners	1(4) 2(2) 3(1)	A(4) B(2) C(1)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	Designations				
	2. Advocate in cooperation with the Agricultural Land Commission and larger municipalities in the PRRD, a boundary review study of the ALR.	ALC PRRD BCMA	1(1) 2(2) 3(1) 4(1)	A(1) B(2) C(1) D(1)	
	a. Support AAC in developing criteria around subdivision and exclusions with in agriculture areas and tax appropriately		1(3)	A(3)	
	3. Support involvement of AAC in the develop of criteria that should be considered in ALR boundary review for both municipal and rural area	AAC	1(4) 2(1)	A(5)	
Support guidelines and programs provided by appropriate government bodies and producer associations for protection of soil quality and quantity	1. Continue to support the delivery of an effective Invasive Plant Program to PRRD community	PRRD, OGC, FLNRO, BCMA, NEIPC, Industry, AG Community	1(4) 2(1)	A(4) B(1)	
Water					
Support guidelines and programs provided by appropriate government bodies and producer associations for protection of air, soil and water quality and quantity	1. Publicize relevant programs where possible	(AAC, BCMA, AAFC, producer associations)	2(2) 3(1) 4(1)	B(2) D(2)	
Advocate and encourage water stewardship, water conservation efforts and secure water supply for food production and human animal husbandry in the PRRD	1. Develop suggestions and ideas for further water stewardship and conservation including programs for additional water storage for agricultural purposes		1(6)	A(6)	
	2. AAC work with water stewardship	PRRD WSC	1(4)	A(4)	To be



Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	committee in investigation water stewardship and conservation	Ag Community			established with WSC
	3. Water Stewardship Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishing aquifers and inventories for PRRD</li> <li>b. Suggestion to promote stewardship and conservations for PRRD</li> <li>c. Collect and post PRRD resources such as the report from the Kiskatinaw River Watershed Research Project and Proceedings of the former Peace River Watershed Council</li> <li>d. Input from existing water committees</li> </ul>	PRRD Consultant Residents Ag industry Industry Geo-science	2(5) 3(1)	A(2) B(3) C(1)	In progress
	4. Collect and post to the PRRD website resources and information available from other jurisdictions such as the 2009 publication, The Sustainable Management of Groundwater in Canada	PRRD Consultant Residents Ag industry Industry Geo-science	2(4)	B(2) C(1) D(1)	
	5. Preserving Infrastructure for water current and future opportunities ie pipeline/water wells (COR, decommissioning) examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1 north Montney/Charlie lake</li> <li>b. Williston</li> <li>c. Bessborough</li> <li>d. Bear Flat, Red Creek</li> </ul>	BCMA ALC OGC O&G Industry	1(1) 2(4)	A(2) B(1) D(1)	
	6. Identify and communicate out the importance to agriculture of	PRRD AG Industry	2(3) 3(1)	A(2) B(1)	Water act allows for

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	unimpeded drainage and riparian areas to downstream water supply and riparian areas, including seasonal flow a. Relation to infrastructure development large area water storages	FLNRO Water Stewardship Committee		D(1)	protection, how to get compliance
	7. Prepare report on the water legislation and harmonization of licensing and permitting for oil and gas industry with agriculture	Ag Industries	2(3) 3(1)	A(3) B(1)	
	8. Support existing "Water Committees", encourage development of new committees as necessary	PRRD Water Committees	1(2) 2(3)	A(1) B(4)	
	9. Support the requirement for application process Large Scale dugouts for non-farm use to ALC, "permitted use"	PRRD Ag Industry BCMA	1(5) 2(1)	A(5) B(1)	
	10. Support and participate in Land use inventory and water demand pilot in PRRD	PRRD, BCMA Ag industry Climate Action Committee	1(1) 2(1) 3(4)	B(3) C(1) D(2)	In Process
PRRD					
Rules and regulations developed by the PRRD should reflect the interests and needs of the ag community	1. Review existing bylaws and planning documents to ensure relevance, ie weed control,	PRRD, Ag community, AAC	1(5)	A(5)	
Support strengthening agricultural development in the PRRD consistent with the goals and principles of ag community.	2. PRRD remain open to agriculture issues as identified by ag community.	Lead: Ag Community Area Directors AAC	2(1)	B(1)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	3. Communication between PRRD Board, AAC and Ag Community	Lead: Ag Community Area Directors AAC	1(3) 2(1)	A(3) B(1)	
	4. Provide adequate agriculture training for PRRD staff	Lead: Ag Community Area Directors AAC	1(2)	A(3)	
Encourage regional, provincial, and federal governments to establish agricultural policies and protocols that are sensitive to the needs of agricultural producers and processors in PRRD.	5. When issues arise, identify and work with relevant stakeholders	AAC, PRRD Board, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions, Provincial and federal government and ag community.	1(3) 2(2)	A(4) B(1)	
Support guidelines and programs provided by appropriate government bodies and producer associations for protection of air, soil and water	6. Publicize relevant programs where possible	(AAC, BCMA, AAFC, producer associations)	1(2) 2(3) 4(1)	A(4) B(1) D(1)	
Support the development, use and reasonable access of Energy including Natural Gas for Agriculture purposes, such as power, fertilizer, grain drying	7. Work with industry to develop the opportunity	Industry, AG community, PRRD, BCMA, NEDC, SEDC	1(7) 2(1)	A(8)	
Support the development and maintenance of Ag waste plastic product recycling	8. Continue to support work being done in Solid Waste Plan and communicate barriers and work on solutions		1(2) 3(2) 4(2)	A(1) B(1) C(2) D(2)	
	9. Provide direction around disposal of "ag waste" ie landfill, recycle, clean, consistent message	NEAT, PRRD, Ag Community	1(2) 3(2) 4(2)	A(1) B(1) C(2) D(2)	

## Production

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Encourage BCMA Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue offering and improving Business Risk Management programs.	1. Support program improvements based on feedback from the agricultural community	(AAC, BCMA)	1(6)	A(5)	
Recognize climate change will impact agriculture and support initiative that address those challenges	1. Encourage ongoing work on how agriculture will be impacted by climate change by advocating for additional research funding and by supporting organizations and groups when obstacles arise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assist, where possible, with funding proposals</li> <li>b. Support initiatives such as fixing the weather data gap for region, Land use inventory (LUI) and agriculture water demand modelling</li> </ul>	AG Industry PRRD CAC	1(1) 2(1) 3(1) 4(3)	A(1) B(1) C(1) D(3)	
Encourage local BCGPA , PRFA, PRFSA, other local groups, BC Ministry Ag, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue providing research and extension services through, Lacombe and Beaverlodge Research Stations in Alberta (AAC)	1. Encourage local producers to provide suggestions that strengthen industry to research and extension partners	Ag Industry	1(2) 2(3) 3(3)	A(2) B(6)	
Support produces continued <b>access to</b> long term historic tenure on crown land, in respect to cumulative impacts of industry.	1. <b>Advocate for early (prior to surveying) consultation for all stakeholders on <u>All</u> agriculture land (crown or private)</b>	AG Industry Other industry FLNRO	1(5)	A(5)	

## Processing

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Encourage/support ag processing with agricultural businesses when consistent	1. Review bylaws and regulations to ensure consistency with ALC regulations	AAC, ALC	1(2) 2(3)	A(1)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
with the Agricultural Land Commission Act and Regulations	a. Amend regulations if required	EDC	3(3)	B(1) C(3) D(2)	
	2. Work with regulating agencies to facilitate establishment of more local processing		1(4) 2(1)	A(4) B(1)	
	3. Support application process for processing facilities through ALC		1(4)	A(1)	
	4. Ensure that the development of the agricultural processing is considered by the Economic Development Commissions and other appropriate agencies and groups in the PRRD. a. Upon completion, present the Regional Agricultural Plan to the Economic Development Commissions b. Consider meetings and ongoing liaison between the AAC and the Economic Development Commissions and/or other groups or agencies where possible.	PRRD AAC, NPEDC, SPEDC	1(2) 2(1)	A(2) B(1)	

## Marketing

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Support the agricultural industry involvement agri-tourism, culinary tourism, and sales of local product, value added in the PRRD	1. Encourage PRRD to share proposals and concerns with EDC	AAC, Ag Industry, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions, Northern BC Tourism Association, local tourism groups such as Tourism Dawson Creek)	1(2) 2(1) 3(2) 4(2)	A(2) B(1) C(2) D(2)	
	2. Continue to review opportunities as	EDC	1(3)	A(2)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	they arise and consider partners as requested		2(1)	B(1) C(1) D(1)	
Support direct marketing opportunities for area producers	1. Review and amend bylaws, zoning, business licenses and regulations, where required, to ensure they support direct marketing opportunities for local food, and sales, agri-tourism, and farmers' markets	AAC, BCA Farmer Markets, BCMA	1(9)	A(5) B(4)	
	2. Review and promote the best practices with the BC Association of Farmers' Markets (BCAFM)	AAC, BCA Farmer Markets, BCMA	1(1) 3(4) 4(1)	A(1) C(3) D(2)	
	3. Raise awareness of local products for sale through website and other communication methods	AAC, BCA Farmer Markets, BCMA	1(1) 2(1) 3(5)	A(1) B(1) C(5)	
	4. Encourage local governments to support existing farmers markets and direct sales when appropriate	PRRD Municipalities Ag industry People at Large	1(1) 2(1) 3(3)	A(2) C(2) D(3)	
	5. Encourage the development of a local council or agricultural direct marketing association if requested	Ag Industry AAC, CFPL, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions	1(1) 2(1) 3(1) 4(1)	A(3) D(3)	

## Transportation

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Support the needs of all stakeholders,	1. Include AAC representation on any		1(1)	A(8)	Short term

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
including the agricultural sector, and advocate, where possible for improvements to road and rail infrastructure (AAC)	Road and Transportation committees that may be established a. Request AAC comment in the planning of new roads or future road improvements		2(4)		and ongoing
	2. Support reestablishment of rural road Task Force focusing on maintenance and development of rural roads	PRRD, AAC Ag Industry Industry	1(7)	A(9)	
	3. Improvement on existing primary roads	Economic Development Commission	1(7)	A(8)	In Process

## Communication

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Support industry efforts to encourage people to enter agricultural production.	1. Work with partner organizations willing to introduce a mentorship program	AAC, IAF, CFBMC, commodity groups	3(2) 4(5)	A(1) C(1) D(6)	
	2. Share information from BCMA programs succession via link PRRD website, this includes cost sharing			B(1)	
Encourage active participation of PRRD in local appropriate events			2(4)	B(5)	
Support new and existing leadership/training and networking development programs for agricultural producers (B.C. 4-H, CFBMC and CAHRC)	1. Promote leadership development programs for youth including the Peace River branches of the B.C. 4-H.	Ag Industry PRRD BCMA PRRD Community relations person	2(4) 3(3)	A(2) B(3) C(3)	
	2. Review leadership/training, networking development opportunities available to the region		1(1) 3(1) 4(3)	A(1) B(1) C(1) D(3)	
Support the introduction of high-speed Internet access throughout the Regional District	1. Encourage the telecommunications sector to implement high-speed internet service throughout the Regional District		1(6)	A(7)	
Encourage the BC Ministry of Agriculture to expand the Regional Agrologist Network (RAN) and continue providing extension services to PRRD.	1. Request info from BCMA about programs a. Determine how to improve program, identify gaps		1(2) 2(3)	A(2) B(2) C(1)	
	2. Promote BCMA programs and services to the agricultural		1(3)	5(A)	



Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	community website links				
Encourage local BCGPA , PRFA, PRFSA, other local groups, BC Ministry Ag, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to continue providing research and extension services through, Lacombe and Beaverlodge Research Stations in Alberta (AAC)	1. Communicate and promote research findings to producers in the PRRD where possible provide links on PRRD website		1(3) 2(2)	A(4) B(2)	
Support working with all relevant government agencies and agricultural groups and associations to address crises and disasters affecting the agricultural community	1. Emergency Response Plan update a. Include ag community	PRRD BCMA, PEP, agricultural community	1(6)	A(6)	Mass Mortality disposal plan complete 2012
	2. Support BCMA in taking lead role in livestock emergency situations		1(1)	A(2)	
Support public awareness and communication about agriculture in PRRD	1. Feature selected agriculture events on PRRD website/newsletter a. Provide link for AITC b. Local fairs c. Tour d. Normal Farm Practices (FIRB)	PRRD Ag Community	1(1) 2(2) 3(2) 4(1)	A(2) B(4) C(1)	
	2. Look into appropriate and communication around Traffic Control, awareness respect for producer use in regards to Ag		1(5)	A(6)	Cattleman there is signage, and legal process
	3. Economic Study on impact of agriculture PRRD/BC a. Determine economic	Economic Development Commission PRRD	1(2) 3(2)	A(3) C(2)	Cattlemen and BCGPA have completed

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
	impact	Ag Community BCMA			some version of this recently
Support Ag industry if the come forward with Protection	1. "Good Neighbour", Crime Watch programs	AG Community PRRD RCMP ALL Stakeholders	1(3)	A(3)	
Support partnerships with other organizations and agencies and working together to enhance agricultural production	1. Facilitate meetings and contact with potential partners	AAC, agricultural community, South and North Economic Development Commissions commodity groups, resource industries	1(1) 2(4)	A(5)	
Regular contact with agricultural producers as a component of effective communications	2. Hold at least one AAC meeting each year in one of the three sub-regions of the PRRD, ensuring that local ag community is invited.	AAC, PRRD Board, BCMA, ag community and their representatives	1(6)	A(7)	
	3. Include agenda item regarding local agriculture issues at every meeting		1(1)	A(1)	
	4. Continue to support open to agriculture community AAC meetings.				
	5. Communication of meeting agenda and reporting out by AAC members, PRRD newsletter, Website		1(2)	A(2)	
	6. Request Regional BCMA website		1(1) 4(1)	A(2) D(1)	
Support effective and meaningful	1. Education and Awareness	AAC, ALC, BCMA	1(4)	A(7)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
communication and networking among all industry leaders and industry workers in the PRRD	between Ag industry and other industries	Funding options: CAPP			
	2. Farmers Advocacy				
	3. Promote industry collaboration		1(1) 2(1)	A(1) B(2)	
	4. Contact industry leaders to address local issues		1(3)	A(4)	
Support industry effort to address all issues and concerns that may affect those operating in other industries	1. PRRD support the creation "Working Group" to be composed of industry leaders and workers	Lead: PRRD	1(2)	A(3) B(1)	
	5. Develop TOR for Working Group		1(2)	A(2)	
Rules and regulations developed by the PRRD should reflect the interests and needs of the ag community	1. Adopt and communicate "Agriculture Lens" from page 37,	PRRD, AAC, Ag Community, Provincial and Federal Government	2(6)	A(5) B(1)	Done
	2. Utilize "Ag Lens" for reviewing federal, provincial regulation, policy, legislation updates				
	3. Ensure consultation with appropriate members of the agricultural community				
Support initiatives that increase the availability of agriculture workforce	1.		2(4) 3(1)	A(2) B(4)	
Support the agricultural industry as an important economic contributor to the Regional District economy	1. Regularly promote initiatives which support the economic contribution made by agriculture and circulate to the public.	AAC, North and South Peace Economic Development Commissions	1(6) 2(1)	A(7) B(1)	

Policy PRRD	Action	Partners/Key Players	Timeframe	Priority	Status
Have an active and effective Agricultural Advisory Committee	1. Refer agricultural issues to the AAC from PRRD board		1(4)	A(4)	
	2. Regularly (every 2 years) review AAC membership to ensure effective members and appropriate representation		1(1) 2(3)	A(1) B(1) C(2)	
	3. PRRD provide staff support		1(2)	A(2)	
	4. Update to the PRRD board about the Ag industry growth, and development in the region		2(3)	B(3)	
	5. AAC annual work plan with budget		1(3)	A(4)	
	6. Provide updates to the Agricultural Regional Statistics		3(3)	C(4)	

### Acronyms

AAC – Agriculture Advisory Committee  
 AAFC – Agriculture Agrifood Canada (Federal Agriculture)  
 AG – Agriculture Industry  
 AITC – Agriculture in the Classroom  
 ALC – Agriculture Land Commission  
 ALR – Agriculture Land Reserve  
 BCA – BC Association of Farmers Market  
 BCGPA – BC Grain Producers Association  
 CAPP – Canadian Association Petroleum Producers  
 CFBMC – Canadian Farm Business Management Council  
 CFPL – Community Future Peace Liard  
 BCMA – BC Ministry of Agriculture  
 CAC – Climate Action Committee  
 EDC – Economic Development Commissions

FLNRO – Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations (Ministry of Forests)  
 IAF – Investment Agriculture Foundation  
 FN – First Nations  
 FIRB – Farm Industry Review Board  
 NPEDC – North Peace Economic Development Commission  
 OGC – Oil and Gas Commission  
 O&G – Oil and Gas Industry  
 PEP – Provincial Emergency  
 PRFA – Peace River Forage Association of BC  
 PRFSA – Peace Region Forage Seed Association  
 PRRD – Peace River Regional District  
 SPEDC – South Peace Economic Development Commission  
 WSC – Water Stewardship Committee (PRRD)



# Peace River Regional District REPORT

**BA-1**

To: Electoral Area Directors Committee

Date: December 15, 2014

From: Bruce Simard, GM of Development Services

Subject: **Review of Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Discussion Brief #1**

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## PURPOSE:

This report is to initiate discussion of a review of the Agriculture Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

## BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

From the July 17, 2014 meeting the Regional Board asked for a review of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)

The AAC was first established by the Regional Board on February 14, 2002 with the initial meeting occurring in August 2002.

At the November 25 AAC meeting, Chair Leonard Hiebert led the members through a roundtable discussion by asking the following questions:

1. what is the focus of the Committee?
2. how can it be strengthened?
3. what can be improved?
4. where are we and where do we need to go?
5. how does the Committee see us unifying and strengthening the Committee - how do we bring back our missing members and keep them here?
6. what is the biggest thing you would change?

The notes from comments received are attached. Particular **themes** that appear to rise from the comments are:

1. More meaningful role for AAC, such as review of ALR applications
2. Improved relationship between AAC and Regional Board:
  - Encourage more two way communication (not just top down from Board) – allow AAC to initiate advice and not limit to responding to Board requests.
  - Consider early involvement in any matters dealing with agriculture
  - Provide timely feedback on Board responses to AAC advice (to promote communication)
3. Use of AAC as a communications conduit with producers

**April 16, 2015**

Staff Initials:

Dept. Head: *Bruce Simard* CAO: *Chibrik*

Page 1 of 2

4. Review structure and performance of meetings considering the following:

- Consider evening meetings
- Shorter more focused agendas (perhaps more often)
- Use of sub-committees
- Use of teleconference
- Avoid ad-hoc random additions to meetings to avoid rambling
- Alternate locations between SP & NP
- Work from a road map of goals/objectives

In preparation for this discussion with EADC, Director Hiebert and the GM of Development Services met to brainstorm ideas for the TOR to renew and revitalize the AAC in order to refresh the Board's relationship with the agriculture sector.

Ideas for discussion offered for consideration of EADC are:

- Provide AAC with clarification/commitment that advice can be initiated from the Committee without first requiring a referral from the Board.
- That AAC be used for the review of all ALR applications. *(this will require further modifications of meetings schedules and possible use of sub-committees, as well as training and guideline development)*
- Clarify AAC role with regard to other standing committees such as *Water Stewardship Committee, Weed Committee, Wildlife Committee, etc.*
- Review of membership:
  - *Is the current list of member organizations sufficient and appropriate?*
  - *Is the length of membership appropriate?*
  - *Should there be a maximum number of terms for any single person?*
- Committee structure:
  - *Is it appropriate for Elected Official to be Chair of AAC?*
- Committee Focus:
  - *Require greater focus by committee (limit introduction of new business to agendas)*
  - *Encourage development of annual work plan (i.e. based on recommendations of Regional Agriculture Plan)*
- That a tour, by 1 or 2 EADC members and staff, of the major producer group associations be initiated during Jan-March 2015 to get feedback and suggestions about the AAC and the role of the PRRD with regard to agriculture.

**STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:**  
**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):**  
**OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):**

**April 16, 2015**



# BA-1

## PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The general mandate of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (the "Committee") will include, but not be limited to the following:
- To provide advice to the Regional Board on matters relating to, or influencing, agriculture in the region;
  - To encourage and enhance the sustainability and vitality of agriculture in the region;
  - To provide a forum for focusing the concerns of agriculture in the region.
- 1.2 The Committee will advise the Peace River Regional District Board on agricultural issues within the region, including:
- Assisting with comprehensive reviews or development of:
    - official community plans;
    - regulatory bylaws pertaining to agriculture;
    - agricultural area plans, and
    - farm policies;
  - Major development proposals with potential impacts on agriculture
  - Water management issues.
  - Effectiveness of noxious insect and invasive plant regulations and programs.
- 1.3 The Agricultural Advisory Committee may also make recommendations on:
- Raising awareness of agriculture
  - Enhancing an understanding of agriculture's role in the local and/or regional economy.
  - Addressing competition for the agricultural land base.
  - Examining and identifying infrastructure improvements to support agriculture.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 It will be an objective to select members from a diversity of agricultural interests in the region represented by broadly based, non-government, regional organizations.
- 2.2 The Regional Board Chair will request the following organizations to nominate delegates for participation on the Committee, from which the Chair will make recommendations to the Regional Board for appointment to the Committee for a period of up to two (2) years:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Peace River Regional Cattlemen's Association | 5. Farmers' Institute                     |
| 2. BC Grain Producers Association               | 6. Peace River Forage Association of BC   |
| 3. Peace Region Forage Seed Association         | 7. Peace River District Women's Institute |
| 4. Peace River Organic Producers Association    | 8. BC Bison Association                   |

\*This list is not exclusive and may be amended or added to at the discretion of the Regional Board Chair.

- 2.3 The Regional Board Chair will publicly advertise for three (3) members at large from the region, who have an interest in agriculture, and appoint such members for a period of up to two (2) years.
- 2.4 The Regional Board Chair will appoint two Board members as liaisons to the Committee.
- 2.5 The Regional Board Chair will always be ex-officio to the Committee.
- 2.6 Advisors from provincial and federal government agencies will be invited as necessary.

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**3. PROCEDURES**

- 3.1 The Committee is advisory and all recommendations will be forwarded to the Regional Board for consideration.
- 3.2 The Committee Chair shall be elected from the membership at the first meeting of each year. In the absence of the Chair an Acting Chair shall be appointed for that meeting by the members present. The Chair shall be entitled to vote at all meetings.
- 3.3 The Committee may meet every second month on the third Tuesday of the month, and/or at the call of the Committee Chair as necessary, unless there are no agenda items to be reviewed.
- 3.4 At all meetings five (5) members, with one being a Regional Board member, shall constitute a quorum.
- 3.5 In the event an appointed Member is unable to attend the Committee meeting his/her Alternate may attend. An Alternate may attend any Committee meeting but will not be reimbursed for travel expenses when the appointed Member is also in attendance. Alternates can only vote in the absence of the appointed Member.
- 3.6 Attendance Policy – if an appointed Member is absent from two (2) consecutive meetings, a letter from the Regional Board Chair will be forwarded to the individual and organization represented, informing them of the attendance policy and that their appointment will be rescinded if a third meeting in the calendar year is missed.
- 3.7 Meetings shall be open and will be held at the main office of the Peace River Regional District in Dawson Creek, unless otherwise arranged.
- 3.8 Executive and secretarial support for the Committee will be provided by the Peace River Regional District.
- 3.9 Operating procedures may be established by the Committee and should be similar to procedures as set out for Committees in “Peace River Regional District Procedure Bylaw No. 1633, 2006.”
- 3.10 Committee members having a proprietary interest in an application or who are personally affected by an application/applicant must step aside from the discussion and subsequent decision on the particular matter.

**April 16, 2015**



**Agriculture Advisory Committee – discussion points – focus/future of the Committee:  
NEW BUSINESS item from the November 25<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

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Chair Hiebert requested member input, what is the focus of the Committee, how can it be strengthened, what can be improved, where are we and where do we need to go?

Discussion points:

- Committee could play a more meaningful role, i.e. subdivision applications (before the Board reviews them), Official Community Plans, would like to work with staff more
- should be involved on an ongoing basis, not just the opportunity to provide a cursory look/review of plans, etc.
- Committee could assist the Regional District, for example, if AAC had been aware of the water and sewer project we could have taken the information out to the groups we represent. People have no faith in local government. Need to work cooperatively.
- Unfortunately, when people are invited to a public information meeting, they feel that the decision has already been made. Need more consultation, more communication – make people aware of the Regional District and what it was designed for
- recommendations from AAC are not valued, not like in other jurisdictions. Board seldom refers items to the AAC, should be working through the Committee, use the group that represents larger groups in the region. Referred items/information needs to be provided in a timely fashion
- main focus so far has been Ag Plan, feel we need a schedule with specific items.
- need for more active participation in all ALR decisions.
- Terms of Reference specify AAC only provides input when requested. Committee needs input on how its input was looked at. Committee could be more of a liaison between the Regional District, agriculture groups, etc.
- initiate discussions with Board on issues that are important to agriculture. AAC gets bogged down at meetings, Should have more meetings with a set number of items, consider teleconferencing. Review and strengthen Terms of Reference to reflect better interpretation of what is expected.
- feel Committee members are not being used for their perspective or for what the AAC was designed for. Proposed water/sewer bylaws impacts agricultural production, but Committee was not afforded an opportunity for input into action plans. Bylaws affect agriculture producers in rural areas – single largest voice for rural people.
- ALC meet consistently w/AAC in lower mainland and valued their advice. This does not happen in the north. It is difficult to discuss items with people when you, as an AAC member, are not aware of the issue. Could utilize sub-committee, who would report back to the AAC, who would decide on direction to be going. Feel AAC should be involved from Day 1, not request input/advice on Day 6.
- We do not have consistent members. Missing producer groups that weakens us, maybe they feel frustrated.
- what day works better for meetings, suggest every 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in FSJ

**April 16, 2015**

Chair Hiebert inquired how does the Committee see us unifying and strengthening the Committee, how do we bring back our missing members and keep them here?

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- timing of meetings is crucial, not around seeding or harvesting, etc. this is our livelihood and needs to come first.
- need more focus on specific issues, we volunteer our time, suggest evening meetings which may encourage younger producers to participate, change how we do meetings, better structure and focus, use of teleconferencing
- more frequent meetings to keep up the momentum. What becomes new business items are issues that arose between meetings. Need to promote agricultural issues, tackle these up front which becomes a course of action, appreciating that there will be standard agenda items.

Chair Hiebert – what is the biggest thing you would change?

- agenda items, get it organized and start tackling those issues.
- could be one way to get people involved, map/identify issues

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**Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Amended Terms of Reference**

**1. Purpose:**

The Agricultural Advisory Committee ('AAC') is a volunteer advisory committee that is being established to assist the Board of Directors in protecting, enhancing and promoting agriculture within the Regional District of North Okanagan ('Regional District'). The Committee's role is to advise the Board of Directors on land use, economic development with respect to agriculture, and other agricultural matters. The Agricultural Advisory Committee has been established by the Board of Directors in accordance with these adopted Terms of Reference. Committee members are bound by these Terms of Reference and the Committee recommendations are non-binding and intended to be advisory in nature.

The provisions of the *Regional District of North Okanagan Procedures Bylaw No. 2413, 2009* govern the proceedings of the AAC.

**2. Mandate:**

- 2.1 The AAC is established to, at the direction of the Board of Directors, engage in but not be limited to any of the following possible roles:
- (a) To review and provide recommendations to the Board of Directors on land use applications, plans or policies that affect the ALR or agricultural operations;
  - (b) Advise and assist the Board of Directors on regional agricultural and food system related issues;
  - (c) Review from an agricultural perspective, issues, plans and specific development proposals;
  - (d) Liaison with local agricultural advisory committees, British Columbia Agriculture Council, and the Ministry of Agriculture, and
  - (e) Promote public awareness and education on agricultural issues in the North Okanagan;
  - (f) Provide recommendations to the Board of Directors on ways to preserve, protect and support agriculture within the Regional District of North Okanagan; and,
  - (g) To act as the Steering Committee during the development of a Regional Agricultural Area Plan, in the event this initiative is initiated by the Board of Directors.
- 2.2 The AAC consider the following when reviewing applications or agricultural related issues:
- (a) the effect of the proposal on the agricultural potential of the subject property;
  - (b) the effect of the proposal on adjoining ALR properties and surrounding agricultural operations;
  - (c) possible acceptable alternatives to the proposal, where deemed appropriate; and,
  - (d) the identification of issues relating to the protection of ALR lands specific to the application.
- 2.3 The AAC may also:
- (a) propose to the Board of Directors educational and public awareness programs related to agriculture in the Regional District;
  - (b) recommend to the Board of Directors support for projects that promote or encourage local agriculture; and

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- (c) make recommendations on agricultural policies and advise the Board of Directors on policy issues relating to agricultural land and appropriate land uses in agricultural areas.

### **3. Establishment, Membership and Appointment**

- 3.1 There is hereby established an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), known as the 'North Okanagan Regional Agricultural Advisory Committee', in accordance with Section 795(1) of the *Local Government Act* and the *Regional District of North Okanagan Procedures Bylaw No. 2413, 2009*. The AAC is formed to advise the Board of Directors on agricultural issues. The AAC is an advisory committee established and appointed by Board of Directors under Section 795(1) of the *Local Government Act* (select committee).
- 3.2 The AAC consists of up to **21** voting members, including:
- a maximum of **eight (8)** agricultural producer representatives that reflect the agricultural diversity of the North Okanagan;
  - a maximum of one (1) representative from each municipal AAC (District of Coldstream and Township of Spallumcheen);
  - Three (3) Electoral Area Directors of the Board of Directors;
  - Three (3) Municipal Political Representatives or Directors of the Board of Directors;
  - a maximum of one (1) person representing agricultural fair boards or farmers' market associations;
  - a maximum of one (1) person representing agricultural commodity processing, distribution and/or retailing;
  - a maximum of two (2) members-at-large appointed by the Board of Directors with priority given to those who are knowledgeable about agriculture in its' various forms; **and,**
  - **a maximum of one (1) person representing young farmers.**
- 3.3 The AAC may also consist of non-voting members including:
- a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture;
  - a representative from the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission;
  - planning staff from the Regional District of North Okanagan; and
  - others, as necessary.
- 3.4 The selection of AAC members shall be in accordance with *Regional District of North Okanagan Procedures Bylaw No. 2413, 2009* and these members will require appointment through resolution to this Committee. In nominating members to the AAC, regard shall be given to achieving a diversity of members engaged in varied disciplines of the agricultural industry and members with knowledge of agricultural and related rural issues. Availability to attend meetings will also be considered. An elaboration of the selection criteria is provided in Appendix 1 of the Terms of Reference. All residents of Regional District of North Okanagan are eligible for membership.
- 3.5 After initial appointments, Board of Directors appointed members of the AAC shall be appointed pursuant to Section 3.4 for a two year term, in the month of September to commence their term of office on January 1st of the following year.
- 3.6 Subject to Section 3.8, all members shall hold office until the later of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year at the end of the member's term or until their successors are appointed. Members

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shall be eligible for re-appointment to a maximum of three (3) successive terms, including partial terms. Former AAC members can be re-apply for appointment after a minimum one (1) year period following three (3) successive terms.

- 3.7 When the membership of the AAC falls below seven (7), any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Committee shall be filled forthwith by the Board of Directors for the unexpired term of vacancy. Any member appointed in mid-term shall be eligible upon conclusion of the term for reappointment to a maximum of three (3) successive terms.
- 3.8 Board of Directors may, at any time, by a vote of two-thirds of its members, revoke the appointment of a member of the AAC.
- 3.9 The Chairperson shall advise Board of Directors immediately in writing of any member who has been absent from meetings of the AAC for three (3) consecutive meetings without prior leave of absence having been granted by the AAC. Leaves of Absence greater than three (3) consecutive meetings may be granted by the Board of Directors when the request for the Leave of Absence is received in writing, prior to the said Leave taking place.
- 3.10 No member of the AAC shall receive any remuneration for services, however, a member shall be reimbursed for any reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of and previously approved by the Board of Directors, including mileage costs to and from AAC meetings.

#### **4. Committee Meetings and Procedures**

- 4.1 In January at any given year, the AAC will recommend to the Board of Directors a member of the AAC to serve as Chair of the Committee.
- 4.2 The AAC shall hold regular meetings, at such time and place that the Regional District schedules and the presence (including audio and/or video conferencing) of 50% +1 of the voting members in office shall constitute a quorum. The meeting shall be held at the Regional District's office in Coldstream unless other locations have been arranged (i.e. site visits). A notice of the meeting will be provided in accordance with the *Local Government Act* and all meetings shall be open to the public, unless otherwise stated.
- 4.3 All voting members of the AAC may vote on questions before it, and in all cases where the votes of the members present are equal for and against the question, the question shall be negated. Any member present (including audio and/or video conferencing) who abstains from voting shall be deemed to have voted in the affirmative.
- 4.4 The Chair shall preserve order and decide all points of order which may arise, subject to an appeal to the other members present. All such appeals shall be decided without debate.
- 4.5 No act or other proceedings of the AAC shall be valid, unless it is authorized by resolution at a meeting of the AAC.
- 4.6 Staff of the Regional District shall be assigned to provide the AAC with technical advice, and required secretarial and minute services.

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- 4.7 When the AAC is reviewing and making recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding proposed amendments to a plan, bylaw or application, the applicant is to be advised of the meeting and is entitled to attend.
- 4.8 Recommendations of the AAC must be adopted by AAC resolution prior to presentation to the Board of Directors.
- 4.9 The Board of Directors may include in its annual budget such sums as are necessary to defray the expenses of the AAC. The AAC shall provide a detailed budget proposal to the Board of Directors on or before October 1<sup>st</sup> of the year preceding the budget.
- 4.10 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the AAC as a delegation must submit a request to the Regional District of North Okanagan, advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak. The Delegation process will be in accordance with the Regional District Procedures Bylaw.

## **5. Committee Reporting**

- 5.1 The AAC will report to the Board of Directors.
- 5.2 A representative of the AAC may attend meetings of the Board of Directors, and may at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Directors, present the view of the AAC to the Board of Directors.
- 5.3 The AAC representative(s) to the Board of Directors will report out on Board of Directors discussions and decisions under the AAC agenda item Minutes/Matters Arising.
- 5.4 The AAC shall present when deemed necessary a report to the Board of Directors which outlines activities, expenditures, proposed work program, and a budget.
- 5.5 The AAC shall review on an annual basis the Terms of Reference and recommend to the Board of Directors any changes deemed necessary.
- 5.6 Minutes of each AAC meeting shall be kept by the Regional District of North Okanagan and forwarded to the Board of Directors. AAC minutes will include a brief explanation, in point form, of each recommendation.

## **6. Conflict of Interest**

- 6.1 If a AAC member attending a meeting of the AAC considers that he or she is not entitled to participate in the discussion of a matter or to vote on a question in respect of a matter because the member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the matter or for any other reason, the member must declare this and state the general nature of why the member considers this to be the case.
- 6.2 After making the declaration, the AAC member:
  - (a) must not take part in the discussion of the matter and is not entitled to vote on any question in respect of the matter;
  - (b) must immediately leave the meeting or that part of the meeting during which the matter is under consideration; and

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(c) must not attempt in any way, whether before, during or after the meeting, to influence the voting on any question in respect of the matter.

- 6.3 When the member's declaration is made, the person recording the minutes of the meeting must record the member's declaration, the reasons given for it, and times of the member's departure from the meeting room, and if applicable, the member's return.

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## **Appendix 1: AAC Membership Eligibility Criteria**

To facilitate the nomination and appointment of new members to the AAC, the following criteria will be considered. The aim is to achieve a diversity of members engaged in varied disciplines of the agricultural industry and community representation with knowledge of agricultural and related rural issues.

### **1. Residency**

Members should reside in the Regional District of North Okanagan.

### **2. Agricultural Expertise and Knowledge**

Applicants engaged in the agricultural industry and/or have knowledge and experience with regard to agricultural and related rural issues should have the following attributes which would be considered as an asset:

- Demonstrated knowledge of agricultural and related rural land use issues;
- Relevant farm experience;
- Involvement with activities of the agricultural community;
- Technical training in an agriculture-based field; and/or
- Knowledge of properties and farm operations within the North Okanagan.

### **3. Rural Experience**

For applicants from the non-farm community consideration will be given to the individual's level of knowledge of agricultural and related rural issues. The relevance of their interests to the mandate of the AAC will also be an important consideration.

### **4. Availability**

It is important that an applicant be able to attend as many AAC meetings as possible and undertake work outside of the regular monthly meetings. An applicant should be able to be contacted or reached during the day in order for meetings to be arranged.

**April 16, 2015**





## PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

C-1

Office of: Chief Administrative Officer

Sent Via Email

March 13, 2015

Ms. Sandra Carter  
Valkyrie Law Group  
1495 Keith Road West  
North Vancouver, BC V7P 1Y9

Dear Sandra:

**RE: Request for Legal Opinion**

Hi Sandra,

Further to our telephone conversation this afternoon, we would appreciate your thoughts and advice on the following:

At the March 12 Board meeting, it was resolved:

“That the Peace River Regional District is the appropriate organization to coordinate negotiation with the Province of BC on the extension of the Fair Share M.O.U. and, further, that the Peace River Regional District engage the services of Blair Lekstrom, Lidstone and Company, and CAO Chris Cvik as lead negotiators; and, further, that the Province of BC be notified that the Peace River Regional District is represented by this team and are prepared to commence negotiations as early as March 18, 2015; and, further, that member municipalities in support of this motion separately inform the Province of BC that they are represented by this team, that negotiations on their behalf will be coordinated by the Peace River Regional District and that they are prepared to commence negotiations as early as March 18, 2015.”

Two member municipalities have concerns with the motion citing the lack of an Establishment Bylaw to coordinate negotiations with the Province of BC on the extension of the Fair Share M.O.U. The two member municipalities believe that prior to proceeding with the above motion, that the PRRD would be required to establish this service through a service establishment bylaw.

**April 16, 2015**

PLEASE REPLY TO:

☒ BOX 810, DAWSON CREEK, BC V1G 4H8 TELEPHONE: (250) 784-3200 or (800) 670-7773 FAX: (250) 784-3201 EMAIL: prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca  
☐ 9505 100 STREET, FORT ST. JOHN, BC V1J 4N4 TELEPHONE: (250) 785-8084 Fax: (250) 785-1125 EMAIL: prrd.fsj@prrd.bc.ca

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Our question is:

Under our Administrative function, does the Peace River Regional District have the authority to coordinate and negotiate with the Prince of British Columbia on the extension of the Fair Share M.O.U. as part of the negotiating team outlined in the resolution?

## Background Information

- The Peace River Regional District currently receives the annual Fair Share payment from the province. The payment is distributed by the regional district to the member municipalities by electronic transfer and the payments to the electoral areas are maintained by the regional district. On an annual basis, the regional district updates a pre-set template with population and assessment information to determine the annual payment.
- The current Fair Share M.O.U. is signed by the seven member municipalities in the regional district and the Chair of the regional district (8 signatories in total).
- Any new Fair Share M.O.U. would have the same eight signatories on the final agreement. By agreeing to participate as part of a negotiating team, a member municipality is not giving up their right as a signatory.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Chris Cvik, CAO  
Peace River Regional District

**April 16, 2015**



# Peace River Regional District REPORT

R-1

To: Electoral Area Directors' Committee Date: April 10, 2015

From: Jodi MacLean, Assistant Manager of Development Services

**Subject: WEST PEACE FRINGE AREA OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN – DRAFT**

---

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Electoral Area Directors' Committee direct the draft version of the West Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan be forwarded to the public and technical review process.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Copies of the draft version of the West Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan (dated April 2015) will be distributed and reviewed at the meeting.

This draft WPFA-OCP includes the following sections:

1. Introduction & Background
  - Planning process
2. Context
  - History, geography, demographics
3. Goals & Objectives
  - What OCP intends to accomplish
4. Agriculture-Rural
5. Residential
  - Low, Medium, High Density Residential
6. Commercial
  - Highway, Recreational
7. Industrial
  - Light, Heavy
8. Civic, Assembly, Institutional
9. Park, Open Space, Natural Environment
10. Resource
  - Forestry, mineral, petroleum
11. Services, Utilities, Transportation
  - Community services, public utilities
12. Preservation Areas and Safety
  - Topography, flooding, wildfire considerations
13. Temporary Use Permits
  - Policies for handling TUP applications
14. Development Permit Area (Moberly Lake)
  - Lakeshore Development Guidelines
15. Implementation

**April 16, 2015**

Staff Initials:

Handwritten initials "JM" in blue ink.

Dept. Head: *Bruce Simard* CAO:

Handwritten signature of the CAO in blue ink.

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**Public and Technical Review Process (2015)**

April	Prepare advertising material (brochure, public meeting events)
Spring or Summer	Review by AAC
Spring-Summer	Technical review (provincial ministries/agencies, municipalities, First Nations)
May-September	Public review (public meetings, Rec Centre office)
September	List of all public & technical comments presented to EADC
	EADC approves any changes
September	Board review (1 <sup>st</sup> Reading)
October	Legal review
November	Board review (2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading)
November	Public Hearing
December	Board review (3 <sup>rd</sup> Reading & Adoption)



# Peace River Regional District

## Development Services

### BYLAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

R-2

To: Electoral Area Directors Committee

From: Erin Price, Bylaw Enforcement Officer

Subject: Enforcement File Update

Date: April 9, 2015

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#### INFORMATION

My name is Erin Price. I am the new Bylaw Enforcement Officer. I started in this position on March 2, 2015. Jacqueline Burton has taken another position within the Peace River Regional District.

Attached is a summary table of enforcement files.

To date there are:

47 Bylaw Enforcement Files in total

So far, I have worked with 19 of these files. The red font indicates these files and the most recent activity.

#### Active Files- shaded blue:

There are 29 active enforcement files.

2 are new since the last report, 1 of which I was already able to close.

There have not been any new files since I've started.

#### Closed Files- shaded pale orange:

There have been 15 files closed since May 16, 2014

3 of these have been closed since the last report

2 of these have been closed since I've started

#### Inactive Files- shaded green:

There are 3 inactive files.

1 is a business that is not operating and is for sale.

1 has an extension from the ALC until December 31, 2015.

1 has a Consent Order deadline of July 1, 2015.

**April 16, 2015**

Staff Initials: *EXP*

Dept. Head: *Bruce Simard*

CAO: *Ch. Birk*

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# ACTIVE FILES

Bylaw Enforcement File Summary March 31, 2015

R-2

	YEAR	FILE NO.	LAND OWNER	DATE OPEN	COMPLAINT DESCRIPTION	STATUS	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ELECTORAL AREA
1	2007	91	WHITFORD, Jerry	27-Apr-07	Junkyard in residential zone	Will continue to monitor	Lot 2, Plan 27341, Part SW-15-86-19	B
2	2007	132	LUNDQUIST, Lanny	27-Jun-07	Junk yard in C-2 zone	No change	L 1 24-83-18 PI 9697	C
3	2007	203	CLAY, Martin & Wendy	17-Apr-07	Concern regarding a recycling and salvage yard operating in Rolla not in compliance with zoning	The majority of the property is completely clear of all scrap metals and vehicles	Parcel A (S22581), Blk 1, Plan 10648, 32-79-14; and Parcel B (T18682), Blk 1, Plan 10648, 32-79-14; and Lots 5,6, 7 & 10, Bk1, PI 10648, 32-79-14	D
4	2009	96	MEEK, Brandy & Faye	10-Jul-09	Non-farm use in ALR & commercial use in A-2 zone	No change	Pt NE 1/4 3-84-19	C
5	2010	64	LEFFERSON, Allan	12-Apr-10	Salvage yard in A-2	March13,2015- I spoke to Tammy from Richmond Steel. They are planning to go when it dries up	Lot 1, Plan 28960, 21-77-14	D
6	2010	107	SAMUEL RANCH LTD	19-Jul-10	3 homes	I have not looked at this file yet	13805 Rose Prarie Rd. Lot 16, Plan 3986	B
7	2011	119	FALK, Greg (PARDY, Gordon)	5-Jul-11	Business in contravention of R- 3 zone	PARDY met Consent Order Deadline and has moved- waiting for PARDY to pay costs before closing his portion of file- FALK requires more investigation- may still be in non-compliance	Lot A PI BCP 39365 12-84-19	C
8	2011	194	GOERTZ, Howard	7-Dec-11	Worker Camp	ALC gave new owner WARD extension to Dec. 31, 2015. Our TUP is on hold until then	Block A District Lot 1307	B

April 16, 2015

# ACTIVE FILES

R-2

	YEAR	FILE NO.	LAND OWNER	DATE OPEN	COMPLAINT DESCRIPTION	STATUS	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ELECTORAL AREA
9	2011	207	LUNDQUIST, Lanny	15-Nov-11	Unsightly Premises, 20-30 vehicles and junk yard	There has been some improvement, Mr. Lundquist has sold the tractor that was outside the fence.	Lot 2 & 3, Blk 4, 35-83-19 Plan 14402	C
10	2012	72	SCHAEFER, Waldemar & Olga	3-Apr-12	Industrial activity in residential area- Charlie Lake	Court order obtained July 2, 2014	Lot 6, Blk 1, 19-84-18	C
11	2012	109	AKULENKO, Andreas and Olga	28-May-12	Four homes on A-2 Zone	No change	SE 1/4 4-87-19 W6M	B
12	2012	210	DONALDSON, Hilding	12-Oct-12	Salvage yard in A-2	Work in progress	15927 Prespatou Road NE 30-86-19	B
13	2013	102	NORNBERG, Neil	3-Jun-13	Salvage yard in R-4 Zone	March13,2015- I spoke to Tammy from Richmond Steel. They are planning to go when it dries up	Lot 2, Plan BCP30608 28-78-15 1728-210 Rd	D
14	2013	164	ZIRA PROPERTIES	03-Sep-13	Property set up as a trucking company	confirmed owner does not live on property despite giving us a lease agreement, is in contravention	Lot 8, 5-84-18 Plan 38300	C
15	2013	203	EBERT, Peter Scott	28-Oct-13	Tank farm contrary to A-2 zone	Consent letter received, Deadline of July 1, 2015 for compliance	NE 1/4 21-83-18	C
16	2013	206	MAXWELL, Joe	4-Nov-14	Storage of many old vehicles	have not looked at file yet	Lot 2, Plan BCP38667 19-84-19 13305 Fell Road	C
17	2013	207	WESTERGAARD, William	4-Nov-14	Storage of many old vehicles	have not looked at file yet	Lot 1, Plan BCP 38667 19-84-19, 12937 Cherry Road	C
18	2014	70	SCHIROCKICH, Anatoli	3-Apr-14	Trucking contractor	Text Amendment Application-refused	Lot 14, Plan PGP47255, 17-84-19	C
19	2014	104	SILVER SPIRITS INVESTMENTS	20-May-14	Campsite operating long term contrary to C-2 Zone	Text Amendment Application-received	Lot 8, Plan 9723, 2-84-19	B

April 16, 2015

# ACTIVE FILES

**R-2**

	YEAR	FILE NO.	LAND OWNER	DATE OPEN	COMPLAINT DESCRIPTION	STATUS	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ELECTORAL AREA
20	2014	116	OSTERLUND/ GILLET/UNRUH	23-May-14	Railway repair business	They talked about removing the interior lot line for compliance. Message asking for update. Preparing warning letter	Lot 3, Block 2, 34-83-18 Plan 16203	C
21	2014	120	K-4 VENTURES	26-May-14	Fabricating in C-2 zone	Complaint Withdrawn- Checking with Bruce- do we close it?	Lot 18, Block 1, 5-84-18	C
22	2014	130	WHITE, Jamie and Jennifer	09-Jun-14	Dugout for fracking purposes	possibly no contravention, have asked lawyer for opinion on our bylaw	NW 1/4 8-78-17	D
23	2014	158	SIMMONS, Bryan	04-Jul-14	Unsightly Premises	Registered letter dates July 7/14- returned. Visited property left the July 7/14 letter on door- may not be a contravention see pics	Lot 17,17- 84- 19 W6M Plan PGP47255	C
24	2014	219	BLAIR, Roxann	17-Sep-14	Junk yard in R-4 zone	Warning Letter and Ticket- received Mar.11-2015-no reply preparing ticket	DL 2083	E
25	2014	245	EVENSON, David	20-Oct-14	Junk yard in R-4 zone	Mr. Evenson phoned March 25th - anticipates clean up within 3 months (end of June). Sent him letter outling specific expectations	Lot 5, 27-78-15 Plan 11473	D
26	2014	247	Squirrel Farms Inc.	20-Oct-14	Industrial use in A-2 zone	Has provided documentation to verify Home Industry-no decision yet	28-85-18	B
27	2014	266	COWGER, Lane	18-Nov-14	House on blocks	Letter requiring building permit sent with application	Lot 4, Block 4, 21-84-19 Plan 14263	C
28	2014	270	K-4 VENTURES	21-Nov-14	Industrial use in C-2 Zone	Rezoning application received	Lot A, 5-84-19 Plan 25617 ex. BCP29506	C
29	2015	36	D. HALL & ASSOCIATES	20-Feb-15	Tank cleaning in I-1 Zone	Registered letter delivered, spoke to owner of business on the property. Asked for proof of business prior to April 19, 2011	35-84-20 exc the N 1/2 Plan A1027 & Parcel A(N33545) 9305 Highway 97 N	C

**April 16, 2015**



# CLOSED FILES

Bylaw Enforcement File Summary March 31, 2015

R-2

	YEAR	FILE NO.	LAND OWNER	DATE OPEN	COMPLAINT DESCRIPTION	DATE CLOSED	STATUS	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ELECTORAL AREA
1	2014	100	ELLIOT, Craig	14-May-14	Recycling Business	16-May-14	No contravention	Lot 6, Plan 12798, 25-83-19	C
2	2013	185	Progress Energy & Aramark Camps	02-Oct-13	Camp operating without the proper permits	16-Jun-14	TUP issued	Mile 131 Alaska Highway	B
3	2014	35	0784782 BC Ltd.	07-Feb-14	Sukunka Music Festival	25-Jun-14	Special Event Permit not required	DL 2439	E
4	2014	114	SCHRAM/GOLINSKY	23-May-14	Gun Range in A-2 Zone	2-Jul-14	Gun Range moved to a suitable new location (Alberta)	SE 1/4 26-77-16	D
5	2014	123	HARDER, Matthew and Marie	29-May-14	Worker Camp	10-Jul-14	No contravention	NE 1/4 31-85-20	B
6	2014	122	WALTER, Aron and Anna	29-May-14	Worker Camp	10-Jul-14	No contravention	NE 1/4 33-85-20	B
7	2009	111	COURTIER, Arthur	10-Aug-09	Salvage yard in residential zone	11-Jul-14	Derelict vehicles have been removed	Lot 16, PI 24431, NE 1/4 23-77-16	D
8	2013	91	SHEARS, John	23-May-13	unsightly premises		noticeable improvement, all the old vehicles have been removed	Lot 6, Plan 13235, 26-83-19 7585 269 Road	C
9	2013	142	KOBASIUK, Johan and Eunice	30-Jul-13	Secondary Home contrary to regulations	1-Sep-14	Operating as a Bed & Breakfast	Lot 2, 18-84-18 Plan 19460	C

April 16, 2015

## CLOSED FILES

**R-2**

10	2008	197	499701 BC Ltd.	16-Sep-08	Operating open camp contrary to zoning regulations	10-Oct-14	Bylaw No. 2079, 2013 adopted 09-Oct-2014	Lot 8, DL 777, Plan 16785	B
11	2014	246	HOCHA, Arsen	20-Oct-14	Industrial use in A-2 zone	12-Nov-14	Site inspection-no industrial activity apparent	16-83-25	B
12	2014	267	MATHESON, Brian & ERGANG, Gordon	19-Nov-14	Industrial use in R-3 zone	1-Dec-14	Existing Non Conforming Use	Lot 17, 12-84-19 Plan 12392	C
13	2014	267	LOBANOW, Oleg & Olga	41962	Two homes + new house being built	21-Jan-15	No contravention	Lot 8, 14-85-20 Plan 25749	B
14	2014	115	THOMAS, Graeme	23-May-14	Trucking contractor in R-3	3-Mar-15	Complies with HBB Regulation	Lot 2, 34-83-18 Plan EPP18396	C
15	2015	17	OFFERSON, Leo	6-Feb-15	Industrial use in R-4 Zone	31-Mar-15	Moved Oil Rig- in compliance with R-4 Zone	12611 215 Rd- Lot 1, S2, Twp78, R15, W6M, PRD, Plan 11764	D

April 16, 2015

## INACTIVE FILES

Bylaw Enforcement File Summary March 31, 2015

**R-2**

	YEAR	FILE NO.	LAND OWNER	DATE OPEN	COMPLAINT DESCRIPTION	STATUS	LEGAL DESCRIPTION	ELECTORAL AREA
1	2006	279	HOSKYN, Louise & Angela	19-Dec-06	Running 1st Aid business from home in R-3 zone, too many business related vehicles	The business is not operating and is for sale.	Lot 4, Plan 10215, 3-84-19	C
2	2011	5	GOERTZ, Howard	7-Dec-11	Worker Camp	ALC gave new owner WARD extension until Dec.31/15. Our TUP is on hold until then	Block A District Lot 1307	B
3	2013	203	EBERT, Peter Scott	28-Oct-13	Tank farm contrary to A-2 zone	Consent letter received, Deadline of July 1, 2015 for compliance	NE 1/4 21-83-18	C

April 16, 2015

Updated: July 17, 2014

## ELECTORAL AREA DIRECTORS' COMMITTEE

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### DIARY ITEMS

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Item

Status

Notes

Diarized

April 9, 2015

Peace River Regional District  
Attn. Area B Director Karen Goodings

Dear Mrs. Goodings and the PRRD Board of Directors,

We wanted to bring forward some concerns and questions regarding the recent Recreation Facility Inventory and Assessment report that was commissioned in part by the PRRD and presented to the board in February 2015. While we understand that the assessment encompassed a huge area and involved many locations, we are concerned that the Peace River Regional District will rely on information presented in the report that is both incomplete and inaccurate to make future decisions. Additionally, we are concerned about others who have read the report and will have no idea from the report what we actually do have to offer at the RPCCC. We are very aware of the great challenges that rural organizations such as ours face as we are regularly addressing issues such as lack of volunteers, usage, funding and support. Unfortunately, reports such as the one submitted can do more to undermine our efforts than assist. We are very creative in 'thinking outside the box' and we have just recently wrapped up our winter skating season. We had great community support and see that this is something that we will repeat. We introduced the indoor skating last winter and with the interest that was shown we expanded on it this year. As well, we are currently discussing/planning an event this year to celebrate the RPCCC 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

We can't comment on other organizations and their status and ratings, but some of the information submitted on the Rose Prairie Curling Centre is incomplete and based on a perfunctory inspection of the outside of the premises. Mr. Hewko did ask a number of questions via email which were answered in depth but not necessarily included in his findings. A complete tour of the building was offered, however Mr. Hewko was unable to take that tour due to time constraints. While many of the issues that were identified are in fact concerns, many of the assets of the facility were overlooked such as the presence of a large kitchen and full washrooms (men's/women's/handicap). Our building is insulated, our meeting room is large and when both sections of the building are opened together we can accommodate large functions, i.e. weddings, and the interior is finished. Mr. Hewko has presented a bleak but relatively accurate picture of declining community use and of some of the aging building issues we, and many others are facing.

Our biggest question that arises from the release of this report is where do we go from here? The facility (that was built by an amazing community effort) has been given a life expectancy of less than five years with the strong suggestion that further investment would be unwise. So, do we close our doors now? Do we tell the people who have invested thousands of hours in building, maintaining and operating the facility that we are done? Do we tell the community members who have worked hard and invested both time and money that it is no longer feasible to operate? We would welcome an open conversation with the PRRD on what is the best way to plan for the future of the Rose Prairie Community Curling Centre that serves the best interest of our community. Thank you for your consideration.

The Rose Prairie Community Curling Centre Executive

**April 16, 2015**