



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE AGENDA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016

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PAGE NO.

ACTION

AGENDA – FEBRUARY 11, 2016

Approve

Supplementary Agenda

Receive

Opening Comments from the Chair

Discussion Items

2

1. Direction of the Committee, Goals and Priorities
2. Information Points for Beef Production in the Nechako Area

Correspondence

3-4

Nechako Valley Secondary School
- Greenhouse – “Living Classroom”
Infrastructure Project

Receive

NEW BUSINESS

SPECIAL IN-CAMERA MEETING

In accordance with Section 90 (1)(g) of the *Community Charter*, it is the opinion of the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural Directors Committee that litigation or potential litigation affecting the local government (Fire Department Liability) or information received relating to the matter must be closed to the public therefore exercise their option of excluding the public for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Information Points for Beef Producers in the Nechako Area

Information the general public in our communities may not be aware of; NVRCA encourage all members to be proactive in educating members of their community.

- ❖ The total dollars in sales at the BC Livestock Sale Yard in Vanderhoof reached just under \$39 million in 2015. Total dollars included the Team or Video Sales of 1.1 million dollars. The number of animals sold was as follows: Calves and yearlings 20796, cows 2927, bulls 482.
- ❖ The beef industry in our area is alive and well after suffering through the years following the discovery of BSE. Producers should be proud of what they do. We encourage you to speak up to local, provincial and federal politicians on the importance of Beef production. Other members of the community should also be encouraged to understand the importance of this sector to their communities.
- ❖ **The Industry is the second largest industry in the Nechako Valley, behind Forestry.**
- ❖ Beef producers and their families contribute to the social and economic well-being of the Nechako Valley and have done so for many years. Our farm families are actively involved in and support all local activities such as local youth and sports groups, church activities, charities, schools etc.
- ❖ With profitability back in beef operations many local businesses are benefiting. Fertilizer sales equipment sales, parts sales, lumber sales, fuel etc. are all on the rise. With those increases come jobs to the community.
- ❖ Demand for Beef in the emerging economies of the world is growing. A recent paper produced by Farm Credit Canada "2015 Beef Sector Report" states "the world export market for beef to grow from 9.9 million metric tonnes in 2014 to 11.9 million metric tonnes by 2023." Hong Kong consumption has almost doubled between the years 2012 and 2013. China is expected to make up 22% of the increase in world beef consumption between the years 2013 and 2019. Canada contributes 5.8% of this export market.
- ❖ There is room for the Nechako Valley producer to contribute to the growth of the Canadian herd and market exports.
- ❖ Numbers from January 2014 showed the Canadian beef cow herd at 3.95 million head. This is down from the high of 5.3 million head in 2005. The herd is the lowest it has been since 1994.
- ❖ With the urban sprawl facing the southern part of the province, cattle numbers are moving north. Our Valley is in a unique growing area, with forage and grass being of high quality, most suitable to raising all classes of cattle.
- ❖ It is not a question of if, but when will our area experience a reduction in benefits of the Forest Industry. The beef industry is poised to help feed the economic void left in the Nechako Valley.
- ❖ This industry has as much right to the fibre supply as any other industry in the region. Shavings supply is important to this industry and should be considered in any decisions regarding timber licences. The industry added value to the forest industry long before the term "Value Added" was used. We took a by-product and turned it into bedding and dressing for our fields. This improved animal husbandry and reduces the reliance on other soil amendments.
- ❖ The industry has been sequestering carbon before it was a topic of discussion with large corporations, politicians and general public. Producers should be proud of being part of the green movement.

Greenhouse – “Living Classroom” Infrastructure Project

Nechako Valley Secondary School

Project Overview:

Stage One – Feasibility Study

- Establish community partners and funding system
- Conduct feasibility study to determine:
 - o Student and community/industry interest (nos.)
 - o Infrastructure design and building costs
 - o Ongoing building maintenance costs

Stage Two – Infrastructure Development

- Secure funds for development
- Build structure
- Develop curriculum
- Establish Dual Credit partnerships

Stage Three – Program Implementation

Project Outline:

School District No. 91 (Nechako Lakes) is proud of its strong history of working with community to create hands-on learning opportunities for students. The District strives to ensure all students have the needed skills to reach their maximum potential. Given this, the District is constantly looking at innovative projects which increase applied learning and skill development opportunities for students in areas that match aptitude and interest. The District recognizes this involves both reaching out to community and having community come into our schools. By working with partner groups the District is able to provide enhanced skill development opportunities for students, which result in greater learner engagement and successful outcomes.

In Vanderhoof, many students have expressed interest in gaining skills in the area of agriculture. This is not surprising given that agriculture is a significant contributor to the local economy. Recent studies indicate that many of the farms in the region are in the position of looking to the next generation to consider agriculture as a career¹. In addition, there is active agricultural research and economic development occurring in the region, including increased crop processing and exports to China². This interest and current labour demand^{3,4} combined with the fact that formal educational opportunities in agriculture are limited, puts School District No. 91 in an excellent position to provide training and skill development while students are still in high school.

To this end the Nechako Valley Secondary School is interested in pursuing the development of a production based greenhouse at the school. This project is in the very initial stages of community engagement. In Stage One the District is looking to establish community partners and to look for funding to conduct a feasibility study. It is envisioned that activities within the greenhouse would be linked with on the ground farm opportunities and research occurring in the region. Furthermore, there is potential

to include a green energy aspect to the project. This facility would provide the school and community a 'living classroom' to run agricultural based curriculum, including dual credit options with post-secondary partners. In addition, the facility would be used to provide project based learning opportunities for academic programs, such as Biology 11/12, as well as support a variety of agricultural career exposure opportunities for other grades.

Partners:

On January 18, 2016 the District of Vanderhoof agreed to spearhead this initiative, given its potential benefits to the greater community. School District No. 91 is looking forward to working with the District of Vanderhoof and other community partners as this project moves forward.

Labour Market Demand:

Agriculture is recognized as a significant economic sector in the Nechako area¹, and recent labour market studies reveal that jobs in this sector fit into one of the top occupational demands.

- Bulkley-Nechako Regional Skills Gap Analysis identified jobs in Agriculture as the top upcoming occupational demand for the region²
- BC Employment Statistics – identifies Agriculture as the top growing industry⁴
- 2024 BC Labour Market Outlook⁵ indicates:
 - o Agriculture managers are listed as one of the occupations with the largest number of job openings for the North region
 - o Natural Resources Industry Sector – indicates farming to be the industry with the largest numbers of anticipated job openings – ahead of mining, forestry, oil & gas.

Potential Funding Sources:

- Nechako-Kitamaat Development Fund (note: they are involved in funding the local forage research project)
- Northern Development Initiative Trust
- Farm to School BC
- Enterprising Non-Profit of BC
- Omineca Beetle Action Coalition
- Healthy Communities Alliance
- Regional District of Bulkley Nechako – Area F

Sources:

1. Regional District of Bulkley Nechako (2012), *Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Agricultural Plan*. Available at: http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/Images/pdf/planning/AgriculturePlan/Agriculture_Plan.pdf. Accessed January 14, 2016.
2. Millier Dickinson Blais (2014), *Bulkey-Nechako Regional Skills Gap Analysis*. Available at: <http://www.rdbn.bc.ca/economicdevelopment/economic-development-proiects/regional-skills-gap-analysis>. Accessed December 11, 2015.
3. The Northern View (July 23, 2014), *Alfalfa shipments proposed for Prince Rupert*. Available at: <http://www.thenorthernview.com/business/268133192.html>. Accessed December 11, 2015.
4. WorkBC (Nov 2015), Latest BC Employment Statistics November 2015. Available at: <https://www.workbc.ca/Statistics.aspx>. Accessed December 11, 2015.
5. WorkBC (2015), British Columbia 2024 Labour Market Outlook. Available at: https://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC/media/WorkBC/Documents/Docs/BC-LM-Outlook-2014-2024_C.pdf. Accessed December 11, 2015.