

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Bulkley-Nechako Agriculture Update



March 2025 - Issue 25

Agriculture Coordinator Update

As I write this update, there is a cold wind blowing outside, and the sky is very grey - typical March weather. However, warmer days lie ahead, and it is hard not to be inspired by the young plants started by market gardeners and greenhouse growers, and all the calves, lambs, and other young animals in barns and fields throughout the region.

The RDBN Agriculture team has projects underway to help producers sell their products and access important services. In addition, the RDBN Water Assessment and Irrigation Study in the Vanderhoof area is well underway. Upland Agricultural Consulting is in the process of connecting with project stakeholders, including producers.

Are you part of the [Connecting Consumers and Producers](#) online producer directory? We are in the process of updating listings, as well as launching a video marketing initiative that will help promote the directory and highlight our local producers. If you are not already part of this free directory but you are interested, please connect with our RDBN Economic Development team [here](#).

BC Forage Council - Common Field Project



Common Field: Crop Demonstrations for Climate Elasticity

The Common Field project is a research initiative running from December 2024 to 2027, focused on identifying climate-resilient annual horticultural crops for northern British Columbia's North Cariboo, Omineca, and Skeena regions. This innovative project aims to help producers adapt to changing growing conditions while maintaining or enhancing farm profitability.

Background

Climate change projections for northern BC indicate significant shifts in growing conditions, including increasing temperatures, decreasing snowpack and precipitation, greater climate variability, weather extremes, shifting precipitation patterns, and drier summer conditions. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is leading this initiative in response to climate adaptation priorities identified by the Regional Extension Committee for these northern regions.

Importance of Research

The research addresses three critical areas of importance for northern BC agriculture. First, the project evaluates crops specifically selected for resilience to the region's changing climate conditions, testing their performance under variable weather patterns and extreme events. A key focus is identifying varieties that require less irrigation, helping producers manage increasing water constraints while maintaining productivity.

Second, the project thoroughly examines the economic viability of potential crops. This includes comparing potential returns against currently grown crops, identifying market opportunities specific to northern BC regions, and analyzing full production costs including equipment and infrastructure needs. This comprehensive economic assessment ensures that recommended crops will be financially sustainable for producers.

Third, the project provides direct support to producers through practical tools and knowledge sharing. This includes developing decision-making tools for crop selection, creating regional demonstration sites for hands-on learning, and building networks for knowledge sharing between producers. This focus on practical implementation helps ensure research findings can be effectively applied on working farms.



The BC Forage Council is conducting a research project assessing the climate resilience of annual, horticulture crops for three regions: Skeena, Omineca, and North Cariboo. The project is called Common Field: Crop Demonstrations for Climate Elasticity. The BC Forage Council is looking to producers to assist with creating a short-list of demonstration crops. **Deadline for completing the survey is March 31, 2025.** Questions? Contact Serena Black at sblack@industrialforestry.ca.



Soil Health - Soil Sampling

There are two different types of soil tests currently required for agriculture fields that receive nutrients (e.g., fertilizer, manure): **soil fertility** and **post-harvest nitrate (PHNT)** tests.¹

Soil fertility tests are comprised of soil samples taken from the top 15cm (6in) of the soil, and post-harvest nitrate soil samples are taken from the top 30cm (12in) of the soil.

Both are composite samples, meaning that the sample sent to the lab for analysis is made up of several samples taken randomly from homogeneous areas of the same field.

"If agricultural operations with a land base of 2 hectares or more apply nutrient sources to land, post-harvest nitrate and soil test phosphorus results from within the last 3 years should be used to inform nutrient application rates."

[BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food Soil Sampling Guidelines](#)

¹[BC Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management](#)



BC Vegetable Marketing Commission (BCVMC) Survey

The BC Vegetable Marketing Commission has distributed a survey link (see below) as they are looking for information from northern (and central) vegetable producers to assist with the development of BCVMC policies. If you have questions, please contact Jerome Lengkeek, Senior Policy and Market Analyst at jlengkeek@bcveg.com. Deadline for completing survey is March 25th (5:00pm PDT).

2025 Northern BC Vegetable Producer Survey

Upcoming Production Insurance Deadlines



MARCH 31, 2025 - Vegetables

Includes beans, beets, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, fresh market corn, lettuce, onions, parsnips, peas, potatoes, and rutabaga.

Vegetable Production Insurance



APRIL 30, 2025 - Grain and Spring Seeded Forage Insurance

Forage Production Insurance



Please let us know what you'd like to see in the next Growing Opportunities eNewsletter!

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