



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

North Cariboo Rural Directors Caucus – Progress Report



JANUARY 15, 2019

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – NORTH CARIBOO

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NORTH CARIBOO

Purpose of the Committee

The Cariboo Regional District approved the establishment of a North Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC) through the North Cariboo economic development function and the adoption on April 13, 2018 of the CRD North Cariboo Rural Agricultural Development Advisory Committee Bylaw No. 5137, 2018. <https://cariboord.bc.ca/uploads/news/id562/Board%20Highlights%20-%202018.04.13.pdf>

The Committee's purpose is to advise the Board on matters referred to the Committee respecting agricultural development in Electoral Areas A, B, C and I in the north Cariboo. The following matters shall generally be referred to the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee for its consideration and advice:

- Partnering with local government to further economic development and build critical mass within the industry;
- Providing a coordinating body for accessing funding for major projects;
- Providing links between producers, processors, agriculture organizations, Farmers Institutes and government at all levels;
- Raising awareness of agriculture; and
- Enhancing an understanding of agriculture's role in the local and/or regional economy.

The following matters may also be referred to the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee by the Board of Directors, for its consideration and advice:

- Farm 'edge' policies;
- Agricultural area plans;
- Legislation to identify improvements to support agriculture;
- Official community plans within or impacting the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) or for agricultural uses.

Project Background and Description

The North Cariboo Community Opportunities Session was held on September 20, 2016 to support increased economic development and diversification with a focus on small business. Representatives from First Nations, other levels of government, and community leaders collaborated with North Cariboo region stakeholders on future economic opportunities.

Following the session, the Quesnel Small Business Resource Team and other key stakeholder groups including agriculture, moved forward the implementation of the priority actions identified at the meeting, by holding a "Working Group" session on October 7th, 2016. During this session, the status of the priority actions was discussed and working group team leaders identified. The North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association (dba FARMED) was selected as the team leader for the Agriculture Working Group. Through further outreach members of the Agriculture Working Group were identified and a Terms of Reference developed.

With the establishment of the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee, the Agriculture Working Group led by the North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association (dba FARMED) is supporting the committee to move forward its strategic plan recommendations and providing administrative support.

Progress Report

Since the establishment of the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee members have prioritized the strategic plan recommendations, which include:

- Continuing work towards the development of a Regional Agriculture Centre;
- Introducing the Agriculture in the Classroom program to elementary and secondary school classrooms;
- Supporting the Forage Action Plan Project recommendations for the Cariboo region as outlined in a report prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture in March 2018;
- Initiating a market and labour assessment for the agriculture sector in the North Cariboo; and
- Supporting the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

Members of the committee joined the City of Quesnel Regional Agriculture Centre Steering Committee, to work with the consulting team hired to prepare a business plan, which will be presented to the Joint Planning Committee in early 2019.

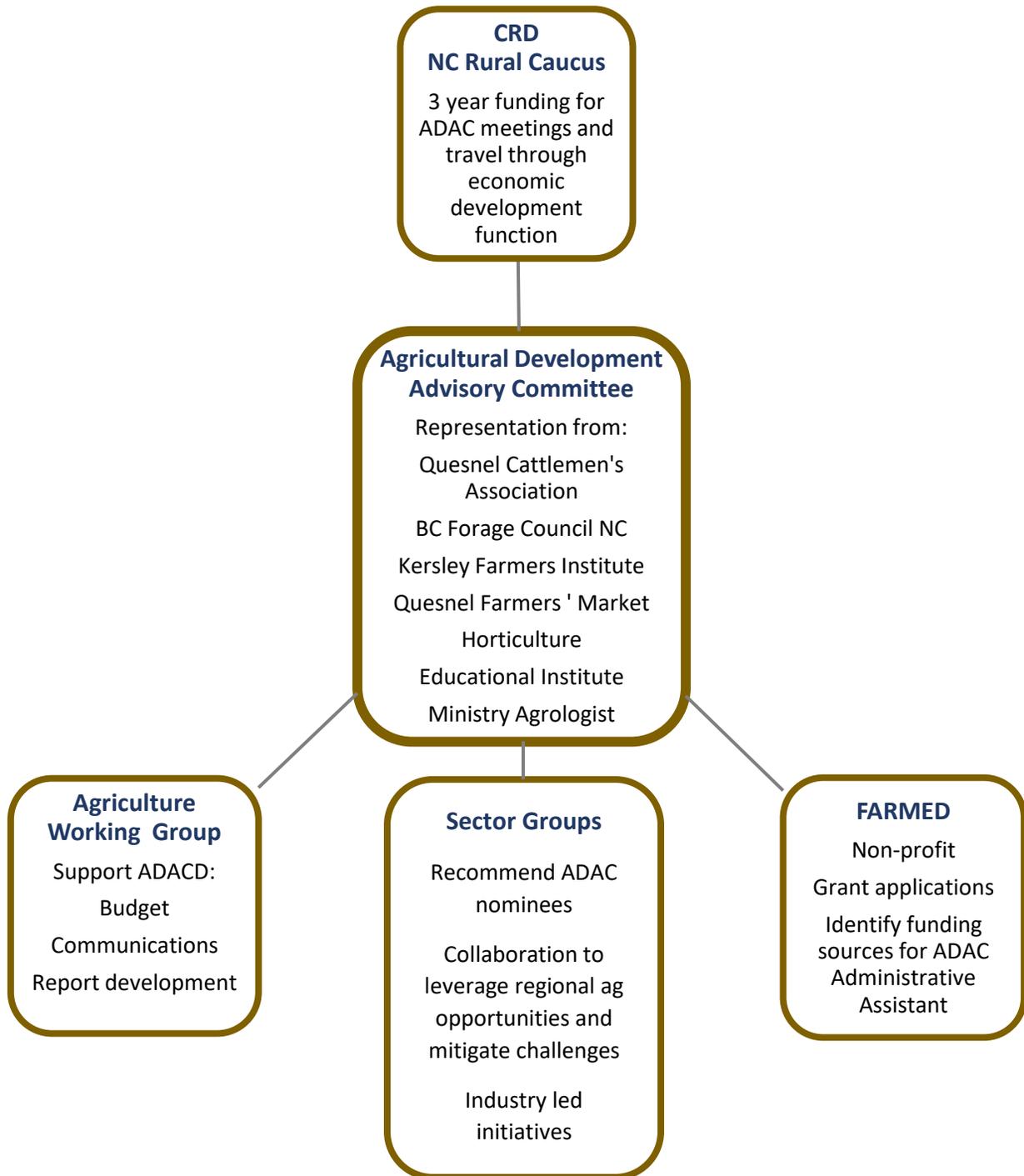
Contact has been made with the Executive Director of the Agriculture in the Classroom program to organize a presentation of the program to elementary and secondary teachers in School District 28 at the January 28th Non-instructional Day.

In November members of the committee participated in the focus group session being undertaken by the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia for the Ministry of Agriculture Northern BC Agri-foods Industry Needs Assessment. The committee members also met with MP Todd Doherty to provide an update and discuss the key issues, which impact the expansion and diversification of the agriculture sector in the North Cariboo. These reports are attached to this progress report.

The Agriculture Working Group has been working with the Cariboo Regional District staff to develop a webpage on the CRD website. Meeting dates for the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee will be posted on the CRD calendar of events and the meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the webpage at www.cariboord.ca/agriculture. A brochure has also been developed and printed.

In 2019, the committee will continue to move forward their strategic plan recommendations. The committee appreciates the support of the North Cariboo Rural Directors Caucus and looks forward to working with the directors over the next year.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE NORTH CARIBOO



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ORGANIZATION	NAME
Kersley Farmers Institute	Martin Rossmann – Chair
BC Forage Council – North Cariboo Representative	Sheri Schweb – Secretary
Quesnel Farmers’ Market	Rob Borsato – Treasurer
Quesnel Cattlemen’s Association	Erin Durrell
Horticulture	Roy Josephy
Post-Secondary Education-CNC	Sonya Spiers
Ministry of Agriculture	Nicole Pressey
CRD Liaison	CRD Vice-Chair John Massier

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Nicole Pressey	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Agrologist, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast
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Wylie Bystedt	President, BC Association of Farmers’ Markets (BCAFM); Director, Quesnel Farmers’ & McLeese Lake Farmers Market; President, North Cariboo Sheep Producers Association and Cariboo Central Interior Poultry Producers Association
Emily Colombo	Community Wildfire Recovery Branch – Acting Manager, Cariboo Region; Rural Development, Lands and Innovation Division Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
Laurey-Anne Roodenburg	North Central Local Government Association
Greg Brink	President, Alex Fraser Park Society
Janet Knopp	FARMED; Growing North Cariboo Society
David Zirnhelt	Applied Research-BC Cattlemen’s Association; TRU Applied Sustainable Ranching; Chair-Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance
Martin Rossmann	Quesnel Cattlemen’s; Kersley Farmers Institute
Sonja Spiers	CNC Quesnel – Operations Manager
Serena Black	Manager; BC Forage Council
Rob Borsato	Chair, Kersley Farmers Institute; Director, Quesnel Farmers Market



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Northern BC Agrifoods Industry Needs Assessment



OCTOBER 31, 2018

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE – NORTH CARIBOO

MARTIN ROSSMANN – CHAIR

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE NORTH CARIBOO

Northern BC Agrifoods Industry Needs Assessment

This report has been prepared by the newly established Agricultural Development Advisory Committee of the North Cariboo to share at the focus group session being undertaken by the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia for the Ministry of Agriculture. The Project Scope in Appendix A provides information on the CRD North Cariboo Rural Agricultural Development Advisory Committee Bylaw No. 5137, 2018, as well as the organizations and members involved in supporting the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC).

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the agriculture activities of the North Cariboo and identify targeted resources and supports that will address the needs of northern BC agriculture producers, and food and beverage processors.

North Cariboo Agriculture Sector

The North Cariboo is comprised of electoral areas A, B, C, I, the City of Quesnel, and the District of Wells with the majority of farms operating in the rural electoral areas. See Appendix B for a map of the Cariboo Regional District.

TABLE 1.1. NUMBER OF FARMS IN THE NORTH CARIBOO AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2011 TO 2016

ELECTORAL AREA	AREA A	AREA B	AREA C	AREA I	NORTH CARIBOO
No. of farms 2011	130	128	34	102	394
No. of farms 2016	143	92	14	76	325
DIFFERENCE	+ 13	-36	-20	-26	-69
% Growth 2011-2016	+10 %	-28 %	-59 %	-25 %	-18 %

TABLE 1.2. TYPE OF PRIMARY PRODUCERS IN THE NORTH CARIBOO REGION, 2016

PRODUCT CATEGORIES	AREA A	AREA B	AREA C	AREA I	NORTH CARIBOO	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Cattle Ranching & Farming	54	24	4	30	112	34%
Other Animal Production	30	29	3	15	77	24%
Hay Farming	40	29	4	24	97	30%
Other Farming	19	10	3	7	39	12%
Total number of farms	143	92	14	76	325	100%

Source:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3210040301&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.2140>

As shown in Table 1.1, 325 farms operated in 2016, a reduction of 18% from the 394 farms operating in 2011. In contrast, as noted in a report compiled by Greenchain Consulting for the City of Quesnel Agriculture Centre business plan, total farm receipts rose by 13% during the same period, to reach \$23.7 million in 2016. This indicates that the average revenues per farm increased from about \$67,000 per farm in 2011 to \$86,000 per farm in 2016. The North Cariboo region has about 12 farms per 1,000 population whereas there are only 3 farms per 1,000 for BC as a whole.

As shown in Table 1.2 about 88% of the farms in the North Cariboo are involved in meat or hay production, compared with about 57% involved in meat production for the province as a whole. Other farming in the North Cariboo includes poultry & egg, fruit and vegetable, greenhouse, and oilseed and grain.



Agricultural Development Advisory Committee Objectives

The Agricultural Development Advisory Committee referenced the Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition (CCBAC) 2008 report to identify the objectives still relevant in 2018 and incorporated committee member recommendations to support expansion and diversification of the agriculture sector primary production and food processing in the North Cariboo. See Appendix C for the 2008 CCBAC Agriculture Sector Strategy Recommendations Summary.

Objective 1: Support establishment of an Agrifood Centre and community-based agricultural staff

- Provide support for an Agrifood Centre in Quesnel to increase coordination of the agrifood industry within the broader region of 300 km surrounding Quesnel

- Assist in coordinating the reduction of input costs of production i.e. insurance, feed, fuel, equipment sharing, etc.
- Create or improve aggregation, packaging and distribution of agriculture products
- Promote the benefits of agriculture, agri-tourism, agroforestry in the area and facilitate consumer access to local food, value added products and agriculture services
- Identify and facilitate the promotion of workshops, training, events and networking opportunities
- Address the agricultural sector's desire for active extension services to individual operations by directing participants in the industry to appropriate resources from the Ministry of Agriculture or other agencies and organizations
- Pursue local, national and international markets for key regional products and link buyers and wholesale/retail markets
- Research information on high growth opportunities including organic, health and functional foods, specialty ethnic foods and markets for convenience and premium markets
- Facilitate an assessment of labour, markets and available resources with the goal of identifying; land lending opportunities, e.g. 5% crop share and capacity e.g. how much product will saturate the market

Agrifood Centre
Identify producer and processor resources and new markets to facilitate capacity building, innovation and sector sustainability.

Objective 2: Develop promotional material

- Develop promotional material about the region and the benefits of participating in the agriculture or agrifood sector to attract producers, food processors and new entrants to the region
- Develop brochure, website and short video presentations featuring vignettes of current and potential production
- Create an agribusiness recruitment package
- Centralize resources on agribusiness into a one stop shop with information related to investment opportunities for start-up and expansion
- Create regional agricultural marketing body which is responsible for synthesizing the current purchasing patterns and sales to local grocery stores, hotels, restaurants, etc.
- Promote regional agricultural products and support regional food system research & development work (e.g. farmers market and food system assessments)



- Work with Good Food Box program agencies or enterprises such as Long Table Grocery to enhance the capacity of regional agricultural producers
<https://thegoodfoodbox.ca/>
<https://www.longtablegrocery.com/>
- Encourage more provincial meetings in the “North” – the central interior of BC
- Potential selling points of the region include: low land costs; less urban interference; lower use of agrichemicals; potential to leverage primary and secondary processing of local products

Objective 3: Develop a labour market strategy

- Develop a labour market strategy to address the challenges of attracting labour for seasonal work
- Introduce Ag in the Classroom into the elementary and secondary school system
- Provide farm tours, demonstrations and field days, career awareness and work experience to students as they move through the elementary, secondary and post-secondary school system

Objective 4: Support extension research related to climate adaptation, innovation and technology

- Support the coordination of research between agriculture producers, organizations and post-secondary institutes
- Assist producers adjust to the impacts of climate change by supporting applied research initiatives recommended by the BC Agriculture Climate Action Initiative and Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance <https://www.bcagclimateaction.ca/regional/cariboo/>
- Address the challenges identified in the 2017 Forage Action Plan produced for the Ministry of Agriculture related to forage production in the Cariboo i.e. wildlife and pests (invasive plants, insects and pathogens); land use, availability and affordability; climate, weather and water; research and knowledge transfer; transportation and market access
- Assist producers increase efficiencies through the use of technology and innovation



Labour Market & Education

Implement Ag in the Classroom and support experiential training and mentorship for youth and producers.

- Organize and filter through the large volume of digital publications and software resources available to the sector

Objective 5: Beef industry expansion

- Increase grazing license Animal Unit Months by 10% for the next 25 years. The increase could be used to extend grazing season or increase cattle numbers
- Target 20,000 hectares of current forest land for conversion to intensive grazing land for the next 30 years
- Increase licensed slaughter capacity and associated processing capability to meet 100% of beef consumption in the Cariboo-Chilcotin
- Identify 10,000 hectares of arable crown land that could be converted to deeded land
- Complete grasslands restoration on 10,000 hectares over the next ten years
- Increase program resources and initiatives by 50% to combat the spread of invasive plants

Applied Research
Facilitate applied research initiatives to address climate change and increase efficiencies through new technology and innovation.

Objective 6: Other agricultural expansion

- Increase licensed slaughter capacity and associated processing capability to meet 50% of other livestock (pigs, sheep, goats) consumption in the Cariboo-Chilcotin
- Create licensed slaughter capacity and associated processing capability for poultry and water fowl in the North Cariboo
- Increase honey production by 20% over the next ten years
- Increase greenhouse operations and farm production to sustain demand for local consumer markets such as in-season vegetables and fruit.
- Extend the length of the season for the Quesnel Farmers' Market
- Expand agritourism to capture equal market share of regional activities sub sectors. This would involve alignment and coordination of regional activities with the BC Agritourism Alliance
- Establish local resources and funding to foster pilot projects for new niche crops and products
- Provide high speed internet access to rural areas to support market development and agritourism



Objective 7: Conversion of Crown land

- Priority should be given to Crown land applications within 15 kilometers of existing agriculture operations
- Establish land clearing credits similar to the forest sector silviculture credits
- Continue to expand programs related to water storage
- Conduct a review of Crown land intensive agriculture policy
- Review the highest and best use policy on Crown land for decision makers i.e. after the wildfires it may be that some Crown land could be more productive through other uses than trees e.g. agriculture production or forage



Objective 8: Opportunities for collaboration and partnership

- Industry representatives with national and international association affiliations
- First Nations communities and Tribal Councils
- Municipal and regional District economic development offices and corporations
- Community Future Development Corporations
- BC Government

Objective 9: Explore new potential business opportunities

- Beef industry cluster development and niche value added processing
- Production/manufacturing: organic foods, honey, specialty crops and diversified livestock, agroforestry and non-timber forest products, greenhouse production
- Agritourism: agricultural education and R&D



New Business Opportunities

Expand production in high demand products such as honey and explore opportunities in specialty products, agritourism and agroforestry.

Explore & develop partnerships.

APPENDIX A

AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP - NORTH CARIBOO

Project Background and Description

The North Cariboo Community Opportunities Session was held on September 20, 2016 to support increased economic development and diversification with a focus on small business. Representatives from First Nations, other levels of government, and community leaders collaborated with North Cariboo region stakeholders on future economic opportunities. Following the session, the Quesnel Small Business Resource Team and other key stakeholder groups including agriculture, moved forward the implementation of the priority actions identified at the meeting, by holding a “Working Group” session on October 7th, 2016. During this session, the status of the priority actions was discussed and working group team leaders identified. The North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association (dba FARMED) was selected as the team leader for the Agriculture Working Group. Through further outreach members of the Agriculture Working Group were identified and a Terms of Reference developed.

Project Scope

The purpose of the Agriculture Working Group is to support the implementation of the priority actions identified at the North Cariboo Opportunities Session, which include:

- The formation of an Agricultural Development Advisory Committee;
- Furthering progress on the Quesnel Agriculture Centre Feasibility Study;
- Developing an agricultural employment strategy; and
- Developing a marketing plan for the “Grown for you” brand.

Progress Report

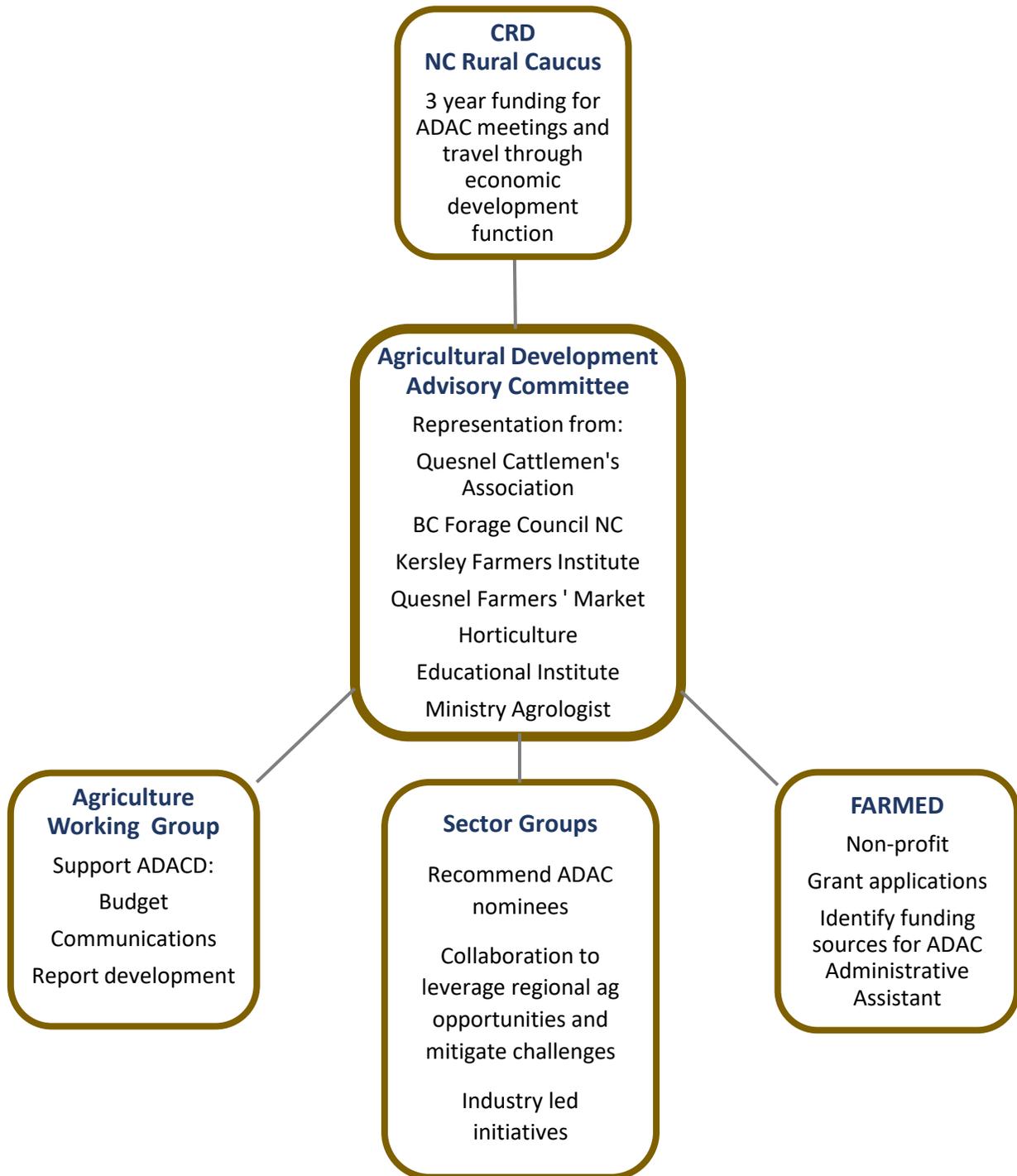
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- Partnering with local government to further economic development and build critical mass within the industry;
- Providing a coordinating body for accessing funding for major projects;
- Providing links between producers, processors, agriculture organizations, Farmers Institutes and government at all levels;
- Raising awareness of agriculture; and
- Enhancing an understanding of agriculture’s role in the local and/or regional economy.

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APPENDIX B

CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREAS



APPENDIX C

AGRICULTURE SECTOR STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Taken from the 2008 Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition MPB Mitigation Report

Objective 1: Develop promotional material

- Create regional agricultural marketing body which is responsible for synthesizing the current purchasing patterns and sales to local grocery stores, hotels, restaurants, etc.
- Cariboo-Chilcotin agricultural logo
- Create an agribusiness recruitment package (\$200,000)
- Develop brochure, website and/or short video presentations featuring vignettes of current and potential production
- Centralize resources on agribusiness into a one stop shop with information related to invest opportunities for start up and expansion
- Partnership with AFPHE to promote regional agricultural products
- Work with Good Food Box program agencies to enhance the capacity of regional agricultural producers to supply a greater proportion of the fresh produce requirements of the co-ops
- Potential selling points of the region include: low land costs; less urban interference; lower use of agrichemicals; potential to leverage primary and secondary processing of local products

Objective 2: Develop consumer education and public outreach campaigns

- Creation of a regional Food Network committee
- This would serve the purpose of promoting regional agriculture and products, informing the public of the social, environmental and economic benefits of supporting regional agriculture to build advocacy in the sector and elevate agriculture as a career path among youths
- Examine the feasibility and marketing options of using the regional branding campaign to promote and support retailers to increase shelf space for local products

Objective 3: Support additional full-time, community-based agricultural extension staff

- Extension staff should focus on addressing the agricultural sector's desire for active extension services to individual operations
- Pursue local, national and international markets for key regional products and link buyers and wholesale markets
- Research information on high growth opportunities including organic, health and functional foods, specialty ethnic foods and markets for convenience and premium markets
- Organize and filter through the large volume of digital publications and software resources available to the sector

Objective 4: Develop priorities for agroforestry support in the Cariboo-Chilcotin

- Improve regional education, training and access to agroforestry information to assist producers with identifying and implementing agroforestry operations
- Establish demonstrations of agroforestry practices within the region
- Conduct economic modelling of silvopasture and forest farming
- Quantify the agroforestry potential of Crown lands in the region, and current legislative/policy constraints, to assess opportunities for expanded integrated management of timber and non-timber resources

Objective 5: Actions specific to silvopasture development

- General guidelines and support materials for converting woodlots or pastures to silvopasture configurations and managing silvopasture systems
- Research is required to establish appropriate tree stocking standards and distribution patterns for silvopasture configurations

Objective 6: Support for farmers' market

- Assessment of current sales and new opportunities as done in the 2006 assessment of the Quesnel farmers' market
- Site or regulatory constraints that prevent the sale of certain items at the markets
- Assessment of new market potential, including the feasibility of year-round indoor sites to extend sales of regional processed foods, shelf stable produce and other products beyond the current seasonal markets

Objective 7: Beef industry expansion

- Increase grazing license Animal Unit Months by 10% for the next 25 years. The increase could be used to extend grazing season or increase cattle numbers
- Target 20,000 hectares of current forest land for conversion to intensive grazing land for the next 30 years
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Objective 8: Other agricultural expansion

- Increase licensed slaughter capacity and associated processing capability to meet 50% of other livestock (pigs, sheep, goats, poultry) consumption in the Cariboo-Chilcotin
- Increase honey production by 20% over the next ten years
- Increase greenhouse operations to sustain demand for local consumer markets
- Expand agritourism to capture equal market share of regional activities sub sectors. This would involve alignment and coordination of regional activities with the BC Agritourism Alliance
- Establish local resources and funding to foster pilot projects for new niche crops and products

- Provide high speed internet access to rural areas to support market development and agritourism
- Construction of agribusiness centres to provide a venue to deliver various business development or extension services to the agricultural sector

Objective 9: Conversion of Crown land

- Establish policy that allows for short term and case specific easing of compliance and enforcements standards where damaged fencing from Crown beetle killed timber is preventing compliance
- Priority should be given to Crown land applications within 15 kilometres of existing operations
- Establish land clearing credits similar to the forest sector silviculture credits (varies from \$900 to \$1500 per hectare)
- Continue to expand the Federal National Water Supply Program
- Through the BC Ministry of Forests, Range, establish small scale salvage incentives to remove beetle damaged timber from fence line corridors and agricultural leases

Objective 10: Opportunities for collaboration and partnership

- Industry representatives with national and international association affiliations
- First Nations communities and Tribal Councils
- Municipal and regional District economic development offices and corporations
- Community Future Development Corporations
- BC Government

Objective 11: Explore new potential business opportunities

- Beef industry cluster development and niche value added processing
- Production/manufacturing: organic foods, honey, specialty crops and diversified livestock, agroforestry and non-timber forest products, greenhouse production
- Agritourism: agricultural education and R&D



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

North Cariboo Agriculture Sector Update - MP Todd Doherty Meeting



NOVEMBER 15, 2018

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MARTIN ROSSMANN – CHAIR

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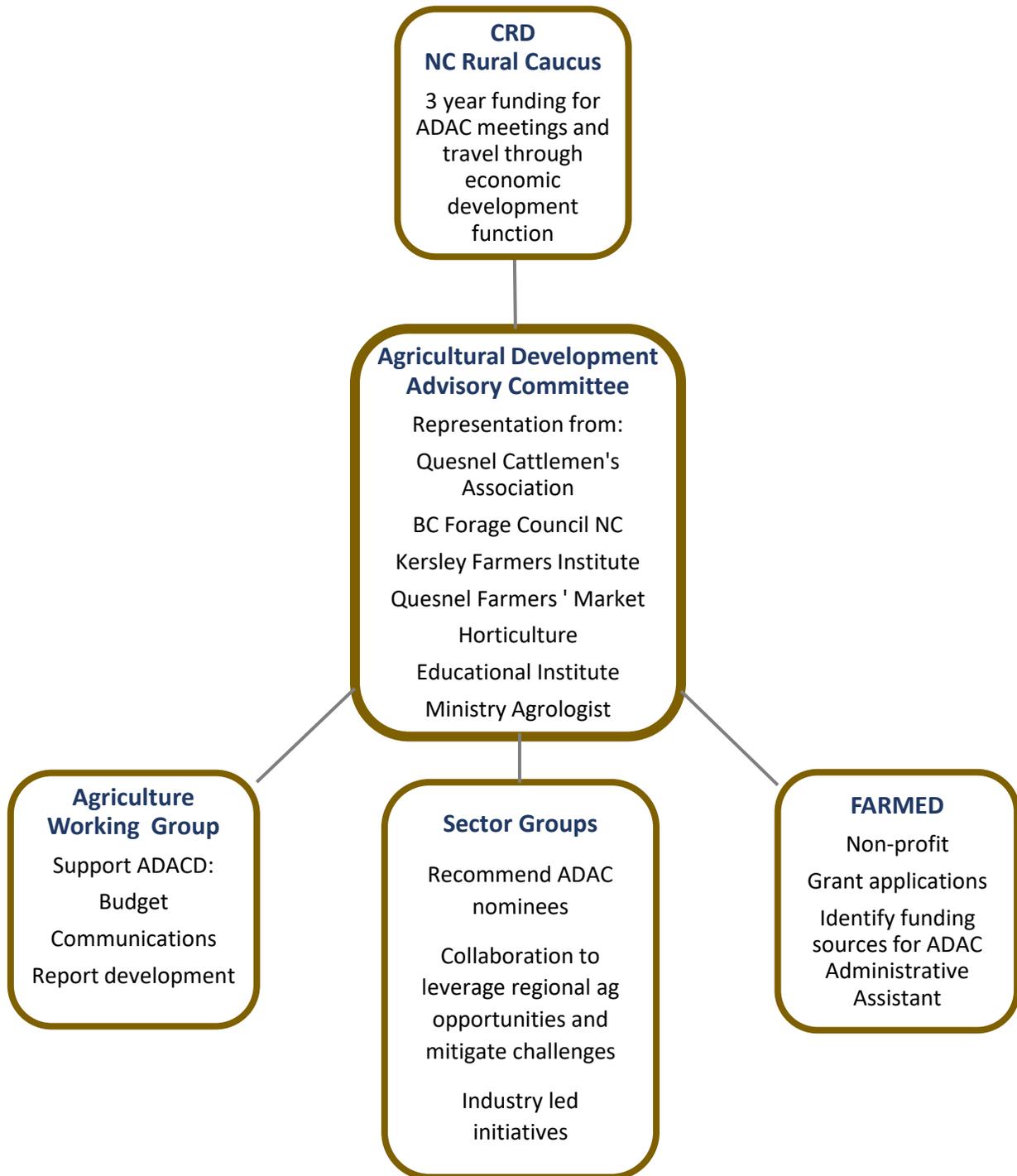
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No. of farms 2016	143	92	14	76	325
DIFFERENCE	+ 13	-36	-20	-26	-69
% Growth 2011-2016	+10 %	-28 %	-59 %	-25 %	-18 %

TABLE 1.2. TYPE OF PRIMARY PRODUCERS IN THE NORTH CARIBOO REGION, 2016

PRODUCT CATEGORIES	AREA A	AREA B	AREA C	AREA I	NORTH CARIBOO	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Cattle Ranching & Farming	54	24	4	30	112	34%
Other Animal Production	30	29	3	15	77	24%
Hay Farming	40	29	4	24	97	30%
Other Farming	19	10	3	7	39	12%
Total number of farms	143	92	14	76	325	100%

Source:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3210040301&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.2140>

As shown in Table 1.1, 325 farms operated in 2016, a reduction of 18% from the 394 farms operating in 2011. In contrast, as noted in a report compiled by Greenchain Consulting for the City of Quesnel Agriculture Centre business plan, total farm receipts rose by 13% during the same period, to reach \$23.7 million in 2016. This indicates that the average revenues per farm increased from about \$67,000 per farm in 2011 to \$86,000 per farm in 2016. The North Cariboo region has about 12 farms per 1,000 population whereas there are only 3 farms per 1,000 for BC as a whole.

As shown in Table 1.2 about 88% of the farms in the North Cariboo are involved in meat or hay production, compared with about 57% involved in meat production for the province as a whole. Other farming in the North Cariboo includes poultry & egg, fruit and vegetable, greenhouse, and oilseed and grain.

CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREAS



Agricultural Development Advisory Committee Discussion

The Agricultural Development Advisory Committee (ADAC) of the North Cariboo developed a report to identify the objectives which will support expansion and diversification of the agriculture sector primary production and food processing in the North Cariboo. The report was shared at the focus group session being undertaken by the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia for the Ministry of Agriculture to provide an update on the agriculture activities of the North Cariboo and identify targeted resources and supports that will address the needs of northern BC agriculture producers and food and beverage processors.

A report developed at Canada's Agri-food Economic Strategy Roundtable called "*The Innovation and Competitiveness Imperative: Seizing Opportunities for Growth*" highlights the need for a coordinated approach in communicating clear guidelines where industry and government can work together. [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/098.nsf/vwapj/ISED_C_Agri-Food_E.pdf/\\$FILE/ISED_C_Agri-Food_E.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/098.nsf/vwapj/ISED_C_Agri-Food_E.pdf/$FILE/ISED_C_Agri-Food_E.pdf)

The following 5 key areas were identified to strengthen the Canadian agri-food sector:

- An agile regulatory system that promotes the competitiveness of the agri-food sector and moves at the speed of commerce;
- Develop and diversify Canada's agri-food markets;
- Build a state-of-the-art transportation and Information Technology infrastructure network;
- Invest in innovation and boost competitiveness through increased automation and digitization; and
- A diverse labour force with the right set of skills to help the sector achieve its maximum potential

Falling within the framework of these 5 key areas, the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee identified the key issues, which impact the expansion and diversification of the agriculture sector in the North Cariboo:

1. A Widening Labour Gap

A widening labour gap is an issue that will increase due to needing more workers to fill production demand and a shrinking domestic workforce, caused in part by a workforce that is older than average and a decline in the number of new entrants to the sector. Factors driving labour shortages include the high degree of seasonal fluctuation in employment, rural depopulation, and limited access to foreign labour. In the report called *Agriculture 2025: How the Sector's Labour Challenges Will Shape Its Future* developed for the Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council and published in 2016, the following priorities were identified:

- Developing educational resources; attract more domestic workers by creating learning resources that promote agricultural careers, outline potential career pathways and dispel misconceptions;
- Improving worker knowledge and skills; improve access to job training, find ways to align learning resources more closely with evolving workplace needs, and support best practices in human-resource management for all employers and managers across the sector; and
- Aligning training with industry needs.

According to the report, "the solutions to these challenges involve finding and keeping more of the right people. By combining the insight and resources of government ministries, educational institutions,

sector councils, and stakeholders, and by supporting the sector in learning from the best practices of its own members, we can ensure that Canada’s agriculture sector will have a greater chance of achieving its potential and continuing to meet the rising need for food domestically and around the world”.

https://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/sites/default/files/files/Labour-Employment/NAT_reportE_final.pdf

Actions taken by the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee and Agriculture Working Group

- The ADAC and AWG are working with the Cariboo Regional District and City of Quesnel to support the team hired to develop a business plan for the Quesnel Agriculture Centre. An agriculture centre could assist current producers, processors and new entrants to the sector by coordinating workshops, training opportunities and taking on the role of an information clearinghouse.
- The ADAC recommended the implementation of Ag in the Classroom into School District 28 schools at the elementary and secondary school level. Additional activities include the promotion and awareness of careers and career pathways in agriculture and experiential activities such as school gardens, farm tours, work experience and field days. A grant application to the Rural Dividend Project Development funding stream was submitted by the North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association dba FARMED to support the implementation of this program into the public-school system in the North Cariboo.
- Members of ADAC and the AWG are working with the College of New Caledonia Post-secondary Education Advisory Committee and the CNC Agribusiness Skills Training Steering Committee to guide post-secondary agriculture training.

Supports needed:

- On-going funding support for the Agriculture Centre to support an increase of primary food production and the innovation of value-added products; and
- Funding avenues to support experiential activities for students at elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools.

2. Improved Research Capabilities

Improved research capabilities are needed to coordinate long-term research projects to investigate difficulties and potential improvements to food production and agribusiness. Currently, research is initiated by post-secondary institutes, but the system is not meeting the needs of producers.

Actions taken by the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee and Agriculture Working Group

- Members of the ADAC and AWG are represented on the steering committee for the Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance (CARA) and the Cariboo Regional Adaptation Strategies Working Group working in an advisory capacity for the Climate Action Initiative work in the Cariboo.

Supports needed:

- Coordination of long-term applied research projects and extension services, which includes consultation with producers and collaboration with the local college and universities. Assistance in communication between producers and post-secondary institutes as well as coordination of applied research projects is required for success.

3. Regulatory Modernization

The ADAC have identified the following regulatory issues in need of modernization:

- Support the implementation of smarter regulation to ensure legitimate risks to agriculture and agri-food production are mitigated at the lowest economic cost;
- Break down Canada's own barriers to trade by leveraging the Canadian Free Trade Agreement to create a path to free trade in food products between provinces and territories', with a focus on harmonizing packaging requirements between provinces and the prescribed rules on packaging, labelling and grading under the Canadian Agricultural Products Act.
- Carbon Pricing - Work with Canadian farmers when developing policies and programs concerning fuel costs and Greenhouse Gas emissions. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) has identified some gaps, such as 'natural gas and propane' being added to the definition of Qualifying Farm Fuel and that the heating *and cooling* of a building for production be added to the definition of Eligible Farming Machinery. In addition, the CFA calls for changes which would allow this benefit to be captured by all farmers in the broader sector.
- Carbon offsets – Many aspects of farm production such as healthy soils, pasture and forests act as a carbon sink. By supporting research and the development of new programs to identify carbon offsets and advanced production methods, the benefits from investing in rural areas as a carbon sink will be felt by all Canadians.

4. Infrastructure and Technology Adoption

Infrastructure and technology adoption are important to the connectivity of producers in the region in order to fully utilize the efficiencies and knowledge required to maintain competitiveness and attract youth to the agriculture sector. These include:

- Digital transformation through 100% broadband coverage to allow full participation of all producers in the Cariboo region;
- Support the work of regulators and industry to understand how new technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, and blockchain could be applied to streamline data and speed up regulatory compliance;
- Encourage investment and technology adoption through significant incentives including an accelerated capital cost allowance for machinery, equipment and digital automation tools.

Actions taken by the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee and Agriculture Working Group

- The focus of the ADAC is on building capacity in the agriculture sector to initially meet the needs of the local region and increase production of in-demand value added products such as honey and garlic. With a longer-term view of increased primary production and agri-food development for the region, ADAC will continue to work with government at all levels to develop the strategies that will support regional increases in agricultural production and diversity.

Supports needed:

- Infrastructure investment in rural areas and installation of highspeed broadband coverage across the region.