

North Cariboo Agricultural Development Advisory Committee

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April 27, 2021

Cariboo Regional District
c/o Shivani Sajwan
CRD Planning Officer II
Suite D, 180 North 3rd Avenue
Williams Lake, BC V2G 2A4

Re: ADAC Commentary – Kwantlen Polytechnic University Organic Extension Services

The Agricultural Development Advisory Committee of the north Cariboo conducted a meeting to review the proposed Kwantlen Polytechnic University *Institute for Sustainable Food Systems* (ISFS) feasibility study for the development and implementation of an organic agriculture and food system extension service in BC. Their goal is to bring forth a comprehensive Organic Sector Extension Service development, implementation, operations, and funding plan for BC.

After a review by the committee members of the proposal, there was general consensus in favour of the Organic Extension Service, with the qualification of a need for additional information and clarification in the following areas:

Governance – The committee is interested in information on the management framework within which project decisions are made and an outline of the relationships between all groups involved and a description of the flow of information to all stakeholders. There is some concern by committee members that the Organic Extension Service will concentrate its focus in the southern part of the province, closer to the location of the program operations.

Collaboration – The committee members are interested in learning the definition and guarantee of collaboration with local post-secondary institutes and applied research alliances, as expressed in the presentation to the CRD Board. How is KPU going to engage with local institutions and involve them with the service? In reviewing the graphic summary of the proposed service's goals and structure, the committee members recognize the similarity in the project's activities and those already implemented by the Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance ([CARA](#)), a collaborative initiative that has engaged more than 30 stakeholder organizations throughout the region to develop applied research and extension activities that are necessary to strengthen the agriculture sector. The regional post-secondary institutes College of New Caledonia, Thompson Rivers University and University of Northern British Columbia are working with CARA to conduct applied research, provide program development and act in an advisory

capacity. CARA supports farmers and ranchers by providing access to regionally-relevant applied research, helping set regional priorities, and coordinating activities that benefit the agricultural community. How can these synergies be supported and maximized? Appropriate coordination of educational activities and strategic initiatives related to organic extension services would be a benefit to the region.

Proposal Financing – The committee has requested clarification on how the proposal is going to be financed. The structure of the program presented at the CRD Board meeting outlined the following components:

- Boots in the community extension agents in each community;
- Steering committee to connect with community about goals and priorities;
- Management team to oversee and give strategic direction;
- Administrative and coordination support; and
- Network of subject matter specialists on organic and regenerative agriculture.

Will the proposed financing provide support for these activities regionally or be directed primarily to the central program operation? Since the Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance is already established and providing similar extension services, the question to consider is where the higher value will be found? If appropriately administered and coordinated with regional collaboration the Organic Extension Services program could provide sustainable agricultural practices for the province.

The ADAC committee members feel it is important that extension services will be accessible to and inclusive of all farmers and processors, regardless of organic certification status or inclination, as noted in the KPU program outline. Many farms in the region are producing organic products, but find the additional costs related to certification to be prohibitive. It is important to recognize and support these producers.

The principal practices of regenerative organic agriculture have been introduced to producers in the Cariboo through presentations, field day activities and workshops and is currently being practiced and evaluated by some farms in the region. Members of ADAC are in favour of supporting practices that retain and improve soil health and productivity in the region. In addition, producers in the region would be interested in opportunities to gain recognition for the value of ecosystem services through new revenue streams for carbon capture when practicing regenerative, ecologically-based agriculture.

The members of the Agricultural Development Advisory Committee of the north Cariboo are in favour of the Organic Extension Service in concept, and look forward to receiving additional information on the governance, collaborative structure and proposed financing options.

Sincerely,



Christa Pooley, Chair
Agricultural Development Advisory Committee

**Agricultural Development Advisory Committee
Member List**

Organization	Name
BC Forage Council – North Cariboo Representative	Christa Pooley, Chair
Kersley Farmers Institute	Martin Rossmann, Past-Chair, Secretary
Quesnel Cattlemen’s Association	Reanne Sanford, Treasurer
Quesnel Farmers’ Market	Desiree Stobbe
Post-Secondary Education-CNC	Tim Lofstrom
Horticulture	Matt Ziemer
?Esdilagh First Nation	Erin Durrell
Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Agrologist	Nicole Pressey

**Agricultural Development Advisory Committee
Sub-Committee Member List
Kwantlen Polytechnic University Feasibility Study**

Organization	Name
Kersley Farmers Institute	Martin Rossmann, Past-Chair, Secretary
Post-Secondary Education-CNC	Tim Lofstrom
Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Agrologist	Nicole Pressey
Agriculture Working Group	Lynda Atkinson
Agriculture Working Group	Wilma Watkin
Agriculture Working Group	Lori Fogarty, Administrative Assistant