

Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING
Food Processors CEO Roundtable

Ref: 190774

Date: September 11, 2019

Title: Food Hub and Feed BC Background and Updates

Issue: The Minister is invited to speak at a Food Processor CEO Roundtable on September 19 and would like to focus on Food Hubs and Feed BC. Section 1 provides background and status update on the BC Food Hub Network and Section 2 on the Feed BC initiative.

Section 1: Food Hubs

Background:

Ministry of Agriculture staff are working with academic and industry partners to develop a BC Food Hub Network (Network) to deliver on the Minister's mandate letter commitment to *"Work with growers, processors, colleges and universities, as well as the Minister of Advanced Education and the Minister of State for Trade, to develop a B.C. Food Innovation Centre to innovate in the processing, packaging and marketing of B.C. food products, linking local food producers with new technology, and expanding exports and access to world markets."*

The Network aims to foster growth and innovation in the processing sector through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, business services and training and education.

The Ministry has heard through engagement with farmers and processors, from industry associations, post-secondary institutions, and through projects we have led such as the BC Food Hub Network Industry Survey, that BC's producers and processors need increased access to processing facilities, specialized processing equipment, to business services, product development, and R&D services to support business growth and advance a competitive processing sector in the Province.

The Network will be comprised of a Food and Beverage Innovation Centre (FBIC) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver and a series of inter-connected regional Food Innovation and Processing Hubs ("Food Hubs"). The Food Hubs will be regionally-tailored and scalable shared food innovation and processing facilities located across the province. The Network will bring together services and technology that improve supports to the agriculture, food, and seafood industries and advance innovation in the province's processing sector.

The Province has committed \$8.3 million over 3 years to support the development of the BC Food Hub Network.

First Nations Considerations:

The BC Food Hub Network is a significant entrepreneurial and economic diversification opportunity for communities across the province, including Indigenous communities and First Nations. Regional food hubs are expected to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of Indigenous groups. First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and/or First Nations' businesses are involved with, or partners in, several currently funded projects and First Nations partnerships and involvement is a criterion that is assessed in Regional Food Hub funding applications.

Discussion (Food Hub Project Status Update):

UBC Food and Beverage Innovation Centre (FBIC)

- The UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems is leading the development of a Food and Beverage Innovation Centre which will be a new facility on UBC's Vancouver campus.
- s.13; s.17

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Regional Food Hub Feasibility and Business Planning

- The Ministry has two funding streams for Regional Food Hubs – one to support regions to undertake initial feasibility and planning work and a second for regions ready to operationalize a Food Hub.
- The Ministry funding for feasibility and business planning supports regions who have identified a need for a Food Hub to develop a model and business plan to increase their readiness to access funding and implement a successful Food Hub.
- The Ministry funded the completion of four Regional Food Hub feasibility and business plan projects in fiscal year 2018/19 (VIU Nanaimo, City of Quesnel, Columbia Basin Trust and the District of Summerland).
- The Ministry is currently providing funding to the City of Salmon Arm to complete a feasibility study which is scheduled to be complete by September 30, 2019.
- s.13; s.17

Regional Food Hub Pilot and Demonstration Site

- The Ministry launched a Pilot and Demonstration Regional Food Hub in partnership with Commissary Connect, which is the first site in the Network, in February 2018.
- The Pilot and Demonstration Site, which is Commissary Connect's Laurel Street site in Vancouver, has been extremely successful in both building momentum for the Food Hub Network project and for the food processing businesses using the site.
- Laurel Street reached capacity very quickly after opening its doors and is providing numerous businesses access to production space, processing equipment, and business services.
- Commissary Connect's Laurel St. facility is a HACCP eligible shared processing hub and is supporting several business using their facility to obtain their HACCP certification.
- As a Pilot and Demonstration Site, Commissary Connect has provided many site tours and shared information on the model to government, regional food hub, and industry stakeholders.

Regional Food Hub Implementation:

- With existing confirmed funding, the Ministry aims to support the implementation of 4-6 Regional Food Hubs with geographic distribution across the Province.

- s.13; s.17

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- The categories and requirements for the categories were developed based on industry, regional stakeholder and academic engagement and are designed to have core common components while also having differentiating components to be able to meet the diversity of needs within the processing sector and in different geographic locations of BC.
- Core common components include shared processing space, access to business services and product development services.
- One of the key differentiating components includes the requirement for HACCP eligibility and lab services for Full-Scale Food Hubs to create opportunity for businesses seeking expanded market access to be able to grow their business using the Food Hub Network services, whereas the Small-Scale Food Hub requires only the Health Authority regulations to be met and is geared towards servicing smaller businesses and/or rural location with smaller sectors.

Food Hub Network Advisory Committee

- The Ministry has developed an Advisory Committee, governed through a Terms of Reference (TOR), that provides advice and recommendations to the Ministry on components of the Network, relating to its creation, strategic operation and long-term vision.
- The Advisory Committee includes government, academic and industry representation.

Next Steps:

- Support the completion of seven regional feasibility and business planning projects.
- Select and establish contracts with successful RFP proponents for the implementation of additional Regional Food Hub Sites this year.
- Support the development of the current and additionally selected Regional Food Hub sites.
- Continue to work with the Advisory Committee on the development and external communications of the Food Hub Network.
- Run a procurement process to further define the requirements for and select a common technology solution that could be implemented in each Food Hub to support operations, common data collection and sharing, and performance evaluation.
- Continue to build linkages between the Food Hub Network and the Feed BC initiative to foster opportunities for BC processors to supply to public institutions.

Contact: Dennis Jess, Senior Program Developer, 778-974-3832

Section 2: Feed BC

Background: Ministry of Agriculture staff are working with government and industry partners to advance the Minister's mandate for Feed BC: increase the use of BC-grown and processed foods in schools, hospitals and other government facilities. Increasing the use of BC food requires innovative support to producers and processors and a system change in food procurement by government facilities and in industry along the value chain.

Feed BC is focused on strategies that encourage, inspire and support a shift to more BC food by:

- Building capacity of producers, processors and distributors to increase supply and availability;
- Building strong, coordinated value chains;
- Shifting procurement priorities and practices within government facilities; and
- Tracking and reporting on success.

Feed BC in Healthcare

In October 2018, Minister Popham and the Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reconfirmed direction and support for Feed BC in BC's health authorities and an early initiative to reach a 30 percent aspirational target for BC food with Interior Health.

In January 2019, the Ministry of Health issued a policy communique directing health authorities to report on their purchase of BC food and, without violating trade agreements, to seek opportunities with group purchasing organizations, broadline distributors, and contracted food service companies to procure more BC-grown and processed foods.

Discussion: The following is a revised status update on Feed BC initiatives since May 27, 2019.

Update on Interior Health Initiative

IHA is continuing to work with its suppliers and the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health to find opportunities to increase IH's use of B.C. foods. Since May 2019, IH has switched to B.C.-processed diced beef, in addition to the earlier switch to B.C.-processed ground beef, and has found a B.C. supplier for muffins suitable for healthcare (currently being evaluated by IH for cost). Ready-made salads are being explored. Other B.C. products have been investigated over the last few months (e.g. frozen vegetables) but have been set aside due to cost implications. The IH project will run until December 31, 2019 and the lessons learned will inform the Feed BC rollout to other BC health authorities.

Two New Health Authorities Confirmed

As of June 2019, Northern Health (NHA) and Fraser Health (FHA) are now confirmed as the next two health authorities to be on-boarded to Feed BC. Operational planning with food services staff is underway, including identifying new BC product opportunities, promotional activities and food services staff education. Launches for these health authorities are proposed for late fall 2019. s.13

s.13 . The learnings from implementing Feed BC in this environment will support work with the remaining health authorities and Feed BC in post-secondary institutions.

Tracking of BC Foods

All health authorities are preparing their first standardized tracking of expenditures on B.C.-grown and B.C.-produced foods, as directed by the Ministry of Health's policy communique (January 2019). Tracking results will be available in late October, 2019.

New How-to Sell to Government Facilities Guide & Other Supports

Preparing producers and processors for the BC government facilities market is a key priority for Feed BC. Many BC producers and processors are unaware of the BC government facilities market, how to access this

market, and its unique requirements (i.e. nutritional specifications, volumes, packaging specifications, food safety certifications). A guide for producers and processors on how to sell to B.C. government facilities is being fast-tracked and will be ready for mid-October. The guide is being produced in collaboration with representatives of the Feed BC Value Chain Advisory Group and will be available in print and web formats.

The how-to guide will complement other Feed BC activities to prepare producers and processors for the government facilities market. This includes Fall 2019 training for food processor business skills development training (targeted to healthcare-serving commodities) and new training on starting aggregation initiatives. Staff are also exploring new sector-specific workshops for the facilities market, and are developing an initiative to support more producers to obtain their GAP food safety certification –a major barrier for many producers to accessing B.C. government facilities.

Feed BC Engagement and Outreach

Staff are preparing to support the Minister's targeted outreach to industry on Feed BC in late fall 2019. Tools and resources will include how-to sell to government facilities guide, enhanced website, access to government facilities market information and other Feed BC reports and participation in industry events and trade shows to promote Feed BC.

Comox Valley Aggregation Initiative

AGRI staff is finalizing the details of Feed BC funding support for a feasibility study and action planning for the expansion of local farm-to-cafeteria salad bar initiative currently underway in five schools in the Comox Valley. This project resulted from a meeting between Arzeena Hamir, an organic farmer and and Director with the Comox Valley Regional District, and the Minister in March 2019.

Feed BC in Post-Secondary Institutions

Feed BC is working partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST) to fulfill the Minister of Agriculture's mandate commitment for Feed BC. This includes facilitating recent engagement with the public post-secondary sector and partners through the Administrative Service Delivery Transformation Initiative. A committee has been struck of eight public PSIs who will be will working this summer to collaboratively to investigate and develop potential actions to encourage, inspire and support a shift to more B.C. foods at public post-secondary institutions.

Next Steps for Feed BC in Healthcare and Beyond

- Develop and implement a value chain coordination strategy (directly connect producers/processors with facilities)
- Finalize and implement Feed BC strategies for government facilities, producers and processors, value chain innovation and performance management
- Build and implement other strategic priorities across Feed BC streams including:
 - Continue key projects with HLTH, AEST, EDUC and corporate government leads
 - Work to expand training and education for producers/processors, product/market development, and Food Hub Network alignment

Contact: Kristina Bouris, Senior Policy Analyst, 778-974-3488

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Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER POPHAM FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING WITH
MARY HAIG BROWN

Ref: 190889

Date: September 13, 2019

Title: Mary Haig Brown Meeting

Issue: Tod Creek Flats

Background:

- Email from Mary Haig Brown referred to conversation with Minister Popham regarding Tod Creek Flats.
- Mary Haig Brown has proposed a follow-up meeting with the Minister and Adam Olsen to discuss conversion of Tod Creek Flats into protected wetland. She believes the timing for converting Tod Creek Flats into a protected wetland is perfect as all four of the current land owners are open to the concept.
- Continued seasonal flooding is making traditional agriculture increasing more difficult and the landowners no longer have visions of farming it themselves - however they will not be the owners forever and are concerned that future owners may have very different ideas around wetland conservation.
- Funding partners to facilitate with development of the wetland may be limited without guarantee of long-term land protection agreements in place.

Discussion:

- A Conservation Covenants is one approach for the landowners. This is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization (i.e. Ducks Unlimited) where landowners agree to protect the land in a specific way. The conservation covenant will be attached on title to the land permanently which may create challenges for future ownership transfer. The Conservation Covenant is under Section 219 of Land Title Act and can be placed on the title with approval from Agricultural Land Commission.
- "Conservation & passive recreation & open land parks" is a permitted Non-farm Use in the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation.
- As part of the conservation process a sub-division within the Agricultural Land Reserve may be mentioned as a requirement to achieve this objective. More details on what is required for subdivision and the benefit from subdivision would be required from landowners at the time of application to the ALC.

Suggested Response:

- The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture recognizes the ecological value of the land and the importance of protecting ecological values in the region.
- Recommend senior staff or the Minister meet with Mary Haig Brown and the landowners as this proposed conservation effort could have major ecological benefits for the region.
- Recommend that the landowners continue to engage with partner agencies (i.e. Ducks Unlimited, Land Conservancy, Local Government and Agricultural Land Commission) to explore strategies for this conservation initiative.

Contact: Doug Pepper, Regional Agrologist, 250-746-1212

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Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING
WITH MAYOR GEOFF ORR, DISTRICT OF NORTH SAANICH

Ref: 190891

Date: September 23, 2019

Title: Minister meeting with District of North Saanich Mayor Geoff Orr regarding Sandown site and food hubs.

Issue: The District of North Saanich (District) has requested a meeting with Minister Popham to discuss the Sandown site and to visit local farms in North Saanich.

Background:

The Sandown site is a 95-acre property (old racetrack) located at the corner of Glamorgan Road and McDonald Park Road in North Saanich. Discussions regarding the site began with North Saanich Council (Council) in 2011, when the owners of the property declared that racetrack activities were no longer economically viable and expressed interest in applying to rezone the lands.

In Fall 2017, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) approved the Agricultural Reclamation and Drainage Plan for the site and subsequently, subdivision approval was granted – creating the three parcels, which make up the 12-acre commercial site and the 83-acre agricultural parcel. Work to reclaim the Sandown site to general agricultural status, required by the ALC, and transform it into a new community farm, has been deemed substantially complete as of March 2019. Council contracted the Capital Regional Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR) in Spring/Summer 2018 to undertake transition planning services for the agricultural lands and produce recommendations for the Sandown transition initiative (Community Farm Plan) relating to vision/approach, ecology and reconciliation touchstones, governance structure, land use/long-term remediation, land designation/site plan, public access, housing and financial plan. Following submission of the report of recommendations, Council requested staff bring forward options for short-term basic maintenance/land use of the property and also make a public opportunity available for the long-term operation of Sandown.

District staff ran a Request for Expressions of Interest this past summer and four proposals were received, which are currently being considered by Council. No land use decisions have yet been made for the Sandown property.

The vision for Sandown is a community farm that actively contributes to local food security, engages the community in local food systems, offers teaching and learning and showcases diverse ecosystems. As part of the vision, Mayor and Council are interested in exploring the linkages of their initiative with the Province's Food Hub model.

First Nations Considerations:

s.13; s.16

Discussion:

s.13; s.16

Suggested Response:

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Contact: Julia Diamond, Director, Innovation, 250-208-9909

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Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING WITH
BC ASSOCIATION OF ABATTOIRS on October 28, 2019

Ref: 190908

Date: September 19, 2019

Title: The BC Association of Abattoirs (BCAA) is meeting with the Minister to discuss opportunities and challenges facing BC abattoirs.

Issue: BCAA has expressed concerns about potential expansion of Class D and E licences, local government challenges, labour market shortages and enforcement.

Background: BCAA was formed in 2009 to serve BC meat producers and provide consumers with safe, high quality meat products. Most Class A and B operators are members of the BCAA. Membership is open to Class D and E operators, some of whom have joined the association.

BCAA provided key support for the sector's transition to the provincial inspection regime since its inception in 2014. BCAA has launched and participated in several programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI) and other industry associations, including the BC Cattlemen's Association (BCCA), the BC Association of Cattle Feeders (BCACF) and the BC Breeders and Feeders Association (BCBFA).

BCAA and BCACF promoted the Certified BC Beef program that enables producers to brand their meat as solely BC raised, fed and processed. In April 2014, BCAA launched BCBeefNet, a website that connects BC chefs directly with producers and processors participating in the Certified BC Beef program. More recently, BCAA has been focused on programs for branding and promoting commodities through a website called "BC Meats." These programs are examples of how BCAA is addressing the market trend of buying local.

Discussion:

A. Opportunities:

s.13; s.16

s.13; s.16

B. Challenges:

s.13; s.16

Local government challenges: BCAA has raised concerns about local governments blocking legitimate development of abattoirs. In April 2018, the Township of Langley (TOL) council denied a re-zoning request for a new poultry abattoir located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). AGRI determined TOL had not requested or received Minister approval for a farm bylaw under section 552 of the *Local Government Act* to restrict agriculture and farm uses. In February 2019, the subject of the re-zoning request was issued a Class A poultry licence. AGRI Strengthening Farming Unit works with local governments to provide provincial legislation guidance to ensure bylaws meet ALR rules.

Labour shortages: Shortage of skilled labour for provincial abattoirs is a long-standing and ongoing problem. BCAA has expressed interest in the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP), which is a federally-run program that allows Canadian employers to hire foreign nationals to fill temporary labour and skill position shortages when qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents are not available.

Currently, farm workers who come to Canada through the TFWP receive only limited-term work permits and have no pathway to permanent residency. However, on July 12, 2019 the federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced the Agri-Food Immigration Pilot (Agri-Food pilot). The Agri-Food pilot offers permanent residency to experienced, non-seasonal workers who will work in targeted agri-food industries that have regular labour shortages. The Agri-Food pilot will launch in 2020, run for three years, and accept up to 2,750 applicants per year. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have worked for twelve months in the TFWP and have an offer of employment for full-time, non-seasonal work in an eligible industry. Eligible industries are:

- Meat processing.
- Mushroom production and greenhouse crop production.

- Livestock raising, excluding aquaculture.

Prior to hiring a foreign worker, meat processing employers must complete a positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) for Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). A positive LMIA shows the need for a foreign worker to fill the job and confirms that no Canadian worker is available to do the job. To complement the Agri-Food pilot, ESDC announced that they will issue a two-year positive LMIA to eligible meat processing employers, including those who use the Agri-Food pilot. This expedited LMIA will simplify the TFWP application process and potentially allow more meat processing employers to hire foreign workers.

Enforcement: BCAA has raised concerns in the past about enforcement, particularly unlawful slaughter operations that compete with licensed operators, and ensuring that Class D and E operations are compliant with the production limits attached to their licences. The Meat Inspection Program currently employs one enforcement officer responsible for ensuring compliance and investigating reports of uninspected slaughter province-wide.

Suggested Response:

The Minister may wish to:

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Contact: Diana Berry, Policy and Project Analyst, 778-698-3427

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Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

Ref: 190934

Date: September 26, 2019

Title: BC Food Hub Network – RFP Results for Regional Food Hub Implementation Funding

Issue: The Ministry of Agriculture has evaluated submissions to a recently completed RFP opportunity for regional food hub implementation funding and has identified the top-scoring proponents.

Background: On June 3, 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture (Ministry) posted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to BC Bid as the first stage of a process to evaluate the qualifications and capacity of regions to operationalize a food hub. The Ministry received 12 responses and invited nine to participate in the second stage, a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP was posted on August 2, 2019 for one month. Participants selected a specific food hub category (Appendix A) and were required to submit a description of their:

- Facility, equipment and activities for the hub;
- Implementation plan;
- Human resources and governance plan;
- Financial plan and project budget;
- Funding amount requested; and
- Expected outcomes and performance measures.

The Ministry received eight applications in response to the RFP (Appendix B) and a cross-ministry panel of experts evaluated the submissions based on criteria including:

- Inclusion of additional value-added elements (i.e., distribution services, food waste redistribution, mobile equipment, etc.)
- Funding commitments from other entities;
- Demonstrated partnerships with post-secondary institutions and/or Indigenous groups; and
- Establishment of a regional advisory group.

First Nations Considerations: The BC Food Hub Network is a significant entrepreneurial and economic diversification opportunity for communities across the province, including Indigenous communities and First Nations. Regional food hubs are expected to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of Indigenous groups. While none of the lead applicants to the RFP were First Nations or Indigenous organizations, two of the three top-scoring proponents have identified partnerships with First Nations or Indigenous organizations. The City of Port Alberni identified Nuuchahnulth Seafood Limited Partnership, a consortium of five First Nations, as a partner and Mission Community Skills Centre Society identified Sto:lo First Nation as a partner, in addition to having representation from the Sto:lo First Nation on the proposed food hub's Board of Directors.

s.13; s.17

The Ministry has budgeted for the selection of two entities to receive provincial funding. This briefing note outlines the rationale for and other considerations relating to the top scoring submissions. A summary of top scoring submissions is provided in Table 1 below. Appendix C includes a summary of all RFP submissions received.

Table 1: Summary of top three scoring regional food hub proponents
s.13; s.16; s.17

Next Steps:

Milestone	Target date
Notify successful and unsuccessful candidates	Sept. 26
Communicate results and discuss projects with AEST and the Food Hub Network Advisory Committee	Oct. 4
Execute contracts with successful candidates	Oct. 25
Post results to BC Bid	Nov. 1
Debrief unsuccessful candidates	Nov. 8
Announce successful projects (news release and/or event – AGRI/AEST)	Nov. 15

Contact: Chelsea Sutherland, Agri-Innovation Analyst, 778-698-9921

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Appendix A: Food Hub Category Descriptions

Components Required by all Food Hub Categories			
Facility Components		Service Components	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food processing area(s) or room(s) and equipmentFood packaging area and equipmentFood storageOffice/board room/training space		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Product development servicesBusiness servicesTraining and education on food processing and food safetyFacility and services coordinatorSystem for user booking of and access to services and facilities	
Individual Components Required by each Food Hub Category			
Food Hub Category	Facility Components	Service Components	Eligible Funding
Food Innovation Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food testing and research lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lab (analytic) servicesApplied research (e.g., process technologies, food safety, product formulation)	\$500,000
Full-Scale Food Innovation and Processing Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food testing lab and/or equipmentHACCP-eligible facility (required)CFIA inspection and licensing (dependent on type of processing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shared commercial production (24/7)Lab (analytic) services	\$750,000
Small-Scale Food Innovation and Processing Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Health Authority regulations met (at minimum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shared commercial production	\$500,000

Appendix B: RFP Submissions

s.13; s.16