

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact
Summary as of 3:30pm, Thursday, April 2, 2020
Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture, 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

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Priorities Heard Summary

Commodities and Systems Outreach

Increasing Issue - labour shortage (local and TFW labour forces):

- Lack of carpooling or transport options due to social distancing measures and worker safety concerns reducing the availability of workers e.g. meat slaughter and processing sector, berry sector, field vegetables.
- Shortages of PPE reducing number of FTE's reporting to work.
- Loss of local labour forces through choice to stay home.
 - Local on-farm labour shortages are being encountered by BC grower/packers who have lost their crews due to transport logistics and fears of safety at work.
 - Berry industries: Without labour the berry industries are in jeopardy. Significant concerns around critical labour shortages - local workers and contractors choosing not to come to work due to concerns about risks to their health.
 - Similar comments other sectors
- Delays in temporary foreign workers impacting the completion of farm work.
- Aquaculture/marine fisheries: indications of long-term interest in access to temporary foreign workers
- Beef sector: Health of workers in processing facilities being watched closely as labour force of critical importance. Work is being done to keep impacts to slaughter facilities to a minimum. If virus shows up protocols are / are being put in place to address

Increasing Issue – PPEs, limited access and low inventories, anticipated shortages.

- Cited as of concern by several sectors e.g. Grains/oilseeds: masks required to move and handle dusty grain during unusual spring harvest; poultry; food processing; others.
- Procurement causing confusion. Industry looking for guidance on a coordinating provincial agency

Increasing Issue – financial impacts:

- Example: Implementation of social distancing increasing producer costs e.g. ensure conditions staff can be on site to look after land-based and marine-based farm or processing needs; transportation of workers to and from sites.
- s.13; s.16

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- Request: Central Coast communities are asking the province to help with stopping non-essential travel to their communities. Communities are remote with limited health care capacity to handle a COVID-19 outbreak. It is important for the commercial fishing industry to have support in creating safety protocols to protect themselves and the communities that they enter.
- Example: Firms increasingly concerned about exposure to rapidly rising balances in 30/60/90 day receivables; low confidence in the ability of their customers to pay
- s.13; s.16

- Cross-sectoral: Access to business continuity supports or credit/financial products may assist short-term cashflow problems but leave smaller companies with unsustainable levels of debt.
- s.13

- BC Agriculture Council: Request as to centralizing flow of information between industry and government. Is there an opportunity to get the common messages back to the farmers that government is hearing through the roll-up and also improve the interactions between BCAC and government in terms of the current information flow.

Regions Outreach

- Increasing: continue to hear about needs around foreign and domestic labour forces.
 - Rapidly losing domestic labour force.
 - Concerns around local workforce choosing to stay home even though agriculture declared an essential service.
 - Trend occurring now and increasing.
- Increasing: continue to hear needs for PPE e.g. food picking and packing, processing. Supplies decreasing. As agriculture declared an essential service will/could PPE be available through a priority supplier?
- Agri Tourism impacts increasing. Industry relies heavily on events - school tours, bus tours, farm stays, on-farm events (e.g. weddings) - for a substantial portion of income. All events are being cancelled. Revenue loss significant.

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- Continue to hear about need for sawdust/shavings for bedding. Lack of sources, sawmills not allowing farmers to pick-up sawdust or shavings on site.
 - Media concern raised about provincial slaughter regulations limiting local red meat products from the Alberni Valley. Request for D & E licences to be available to producers.
 - Request: Farmers looking for information on good agriculture practices related to on-farm food safety – FAQ sheet, or other forms of information (webinar) on how to package goods and keep customers and staff safe. Producers aware there is a lot of information being circulated, but a single source of information from the Ministry desirable. Looking for some very practical health and safety protocols for managing field staff for upcoming season.
 - Producers entering or in middle of production seasons (e.g. ranchers in middle of calving season). Those with young families, children at home due to school and daycare closures. Are child-care supports available to producer families adding care of children not in school to their workloads around critical production times?
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Background

- Number of Workers in BC from Mexico and expected demand from Mexico:
 - 242 farm employers already have workers from Mexico.
 - 1,990 workers from Mexico are on the 242 farms in BC.
 - 2 farms have over 100 workers
 - 15 farms have between 20 to 100 workers
 - 35 farms have between 10 to 19 workers
 - 60 farms have between 5 to 9 workers
 - 130 farms have under 5 workers
 - 1,144 workers = immediate demand for new employees from Mexico. Farms are expecting to get 617 new workers from Mexico in March, and 527 new workers from Mexico in April.
 - On March 22 AGRI was informed that an additional 36 TFW arrived on March 18, 2020, which was the last arrival date (numbers will be updated for next iteration).
 - By the end of April, farms were anticipating a total 3,134 workers from Mexico.
- Number of Workers in BC from Jamaica
 - Preliminary analysis of information provided by BCAC and Jamaican Liaison Service:
 - 95 workers have arrived, and are mostly located in Okanagan, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island
 - Flights are booked for an additional 51 workers from March 23 to May 25
 - 160 = Immediate demand forecast based on 2019 figures anticipated between April and May

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- Estimates of other demand and supply:
 - In 2019, B.C. had a total of 13,252 work permits issued for TFW in agriculture, fish and seafood, and food processing. As of December 31, 2019, approximately 5,990 work permits were active.
 - Work permits indicate the maximum number of approved workers but does not indicate exactly how many people came in as workers.
 - This means that BC agriculture, fish and seafood, and food processing employers are approved and anticipating being able to hire up to 2,856 additional workers over and above the known data from Mexico. The latest information from Jamaica may help with that demand but more analysis is necessary.
- In 2018 BC received 16,890 work permits for temporary foreign workers (TFW) for all agricultural occupations. An increase of 56% over 2017. BC had a total of 13,040 temporary foreign workers in all agricultural positions, a 42% increase from 2017.
- According to the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, TFW account for approximately 23% of the province's agricultural workforce (2017).
- The high percentage of foreign workers in BC's workforce is largely due to the province's high proportion of 'tree fruit and vine' and 'greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture' workers. Additional sectors immediately impacted are Berries, field vegetables (transplanting/seeding) and bees.
- Because these are highly seasonal and labour intensive industries, they tend to be heavily reliant on foreign workers.
- Together, these industries account for over half (53%) of British Columbia's agricultural workforce, and 96% of the province's foreign workers.
- There are gaps in understanding how many, where are they located, and what countries did they arrive from.
 - Certain employers will be able to access TFW through exemptions to be announced during the week of March 23 include
 - seasonal agricultural workers, fish/seafood workers, caregivers and all other temporary foreign workers
 - international students who held a valid study permit, or had been approved for a study permit, when the travel restrictions took effect on March 18, 2020
 - permanent resident applicants who had been approved for permanent residence before the travel restrictions were announced on March 16, 2020, but who had not yet travelled to Canada
 - Temporary modification is being made to the Labour Market Impact Assessment process for agriculture and food processing employers, as the required 2-week recruitment period will be waived for the next 6 months.
 - Increasing the maximum allowable employment duration for workers in the low-wage stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program from 1 to 2 years. This will improve flexibility and reduce the administrative burden for employers, including those in food processing.
 - In addition to health screening protocols before travel, all individuals entering from abroad must isolate for 14 days upon their arrival in Canada.

Systems/Supports

Animal Welfare

Prepared by Anna North

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Events Affected

As of March 23, 2020 – General Humane Society Update (from media clips)

- The BC SPCA has cancelled its fundraising events and spring break camps for children.
- Fundraisers for the Victoria Humane Society have been delayed and donations have dried up.
- Seattle, Washington: Collaborations between dog and cat medical insurers, and animal welfare organizations are happening due to concerns related to quarantines and impacted family pets. Those concerned include: veterinary hospitals, veterinary educational institutions, and government and non-profit animal shelters.

As of March 19, 2020 – BC SPCA Update

- Had to cancel their national conference which is a significant source of revenue.
- BC SPCA Call Centre will continue handling complaints of animal cruelty and neglect and constables will respond to these calls, with enhanced safety precautions in place.
- (Services remain open at this time.)

Current Impacts

- Many BC SPCA services fall within the general category of essential services in British Columbia during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The complete list of essential services includes provisions for animal health and welfare at farms, boarding kennels, animal shelters, as well as other service providers.
- Funding for agencies providing to provide potential emergency operational funding is being explored. A TB submission was drafted by ENV and subsequently transitioned directly to the DMO. The status of the request is: undergoing review/assessment with Treasury Board
- BC SPCA is encouraging public adoption of sheltered animals to alleviate shelter pressures.
- Certain SPCA facilities are offering 50 per cent off adoptions as an incentive. However, the BCSPCA is significantly restricting public access to its shelters to protect its staff, volunteers and members of the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Victoria Humane Society says economic impact of the pandemic is affecting people's ability to look after and pay for their pets.
- There is an increase in the number of people offering to foster animals because they are home.
- Ontario's Lakefield Animal Welfare Society is closing due to COVID-19 and looking for people to foster or adopt cats.
- Have had to develop CID protocols to be used in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis related to: operational; attendance at BC SPCA facilities and workplace; attendance at properties; removal of animals; and situations of exposure to COVID-19.
- Lack of sanitation supplies needed to minimize risk at shelters.

Anticipated Impacts

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- PAWS For Hope: Feral cat population expected to explode in BC due to organizations suspending the provision of services to curb the growth of feral cats (i.e. trap-neuter-return programs, veterinary services to spay/neuter) and greater numbers of abandoned cats due to the inability of people to care for/pay for looking after them.
- Concerns about shortage of staff due to them becoming ill.
- Potential of lack of shelter space as other smaller shelters may not have capacity to provide sufficient care and resources.
- Significant loss of revenue.

Agritech

Prepared by Julia Diamond

Events Affected

- 2020 #BC Tech Summit (early Jun) -Cancelled/postponed

Current Impacts

- Agritech companies who are clients of the Agriculture Venture Accelerator Program (AVAP) identified the following business areas which currently need the most support amid COVID-19 concerns.
- **Financing:** one-time grants/small business loans to help bridge this critical period and mitigate against slowdown in sales
- **Sales support:** Government purchasing, purchase order financing, export support
- **HR support:** payroll tax relief, layoff support, staff counselling
- **Operations:** remote work tech grants, admin/legal support, etc.
- **R&D support:** IRAP funds, admin/legal support
- **Other supports:** online platform to access investors/stay in touch, online education, etc.

Anticipated Impacts

- Withdrawal of deals/shortage of investment funding for agritech start-ups
- Inability to materialize products in time
- Job losses

Outreach

Clean Tech

Catriona Power, Principle contact

[1-778-751-3426](tel:1-778-751-3426)/cpower@foresightsightcac.com

- Their team at Foresight Cleantech Accelerator has compiled a report of the impact of COVID-19 on cleantech businesses.
- 118 companies responded in total over a 1.5 day period.

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- In the report we have highlighted needs for Financing, HR, Technology Development and Operations. We hope you take these insights into consideration as you are drafting and developing packages to support business.

BC Food Hub Network

Prepared by Julia Diamond/Dennis Jess – Innovation and Adaptation Services Branch

Events Affected

- None at this time
- May-June events planned for may be impacted (TBD)

Current Impacts

- Food processor member production declines or halted due to loss of market channels
- Food processor members starting to be unable to pay rent resulting in significant revenue loss to commissary/food hub
- Delays in planning processes for Food Hubs, but continued commitment to projects.
- Loss of funding from investors is seriously threatening expansion plans underway for existing operator
- Capital region Mustard Seed Food Hub is experiencing lowered food donations and higher demand for food by in need populations
- Shifting business focus to meet current challenges – e.g. online sales platform for processors. Focus on needs of vulnerable populations.

Anticipated Impacts

- Ongoing declines in production and revenue due to loss of markets for food processor members and in turn loss of rental income for commissaries/food hubs
- Delayed opening of Provincially funded Food Hubs currently under development
- Delayed planning/Declines in investment available for regional Food Hub initiatives seeking to move into implementation
- Currently construction is continuing at Surrey Food Hub as planned, delays may occur if the contractors reduce services/staff due to impacts
- Crisis seen to further emphasize the need for regional Food Hubs

Outreach

s.21

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- Commissary is starting to experience and is extremely concerned over loss of income that will occur as a result of members unable to pay rental fees due to their business losses

Anticipated Impacts

- s.13
-

YVR Prep

Josh Vanderheide

s.22

Current Impacts

- YVR Prep facing significant reduction in usage and associated loss of revenue
- s.21
-

Anticipated Impacts

- s.13
-
-

Plenty & Grace

Lee Murphy

sales@thepreservatory.com

Current Impacts

- No reported impacts to date on the Food Hub under development
- Bank loans/financing commitments remain in place
- Construction on the new facility is underway and currently continuing

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Anticipated Impacts

- If construction companies/contractors are impacted it may cause delays in timelines for Food Hub launch

Good To Grow

Andrea Gray-Grant

Current Impacts

- Transitioned focus to developing a 'Home Delivery Program' – website will be live at BCLocalRoot.ca (using Shopify platform) to support sales of food processing businesses
 - Working with commissaries in the Vancouver area and the businesses at the commissaries will be selling their product through BClocalroot.ca

Anticipated Impacts

- If online platform is successful, it may support food processors, commissary/food hub members and in turn the food hubs themselves to have a new market channel and revenue stream

CRFAIR/Mustard Seed Food Hub

Linda Geggie

lgeggie@telus.net

Current Impacts

- The facility for which a food processing hub plan was developed is the Food Security and Distribution Warehouse owned by the Mustard Seed Food Bank
- The Food Hub is facing challenges with food recovery and distribution
 - Development of new protocol for operations underway
 - Lack of volunteers available and staffing challenges
 - Decreasing food donations and hence availability of food for distribution
- High demand for food to in need populations

Anticipated Impacts

- Increase in need for food distribution for those in need
- Resourcing challenges and lowered food donations during this time is threat to critical services provided by Mustard Seed Food Hub which are increasing in demand

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- Anticipated that external supports will be required

Crop Inputs

Terralink Horticulture (Input Supplier)

Matt Thurston

s.22

Current Impact

- Growers have purchased pesticides and fertilizers three to four weeks earlier than usual due to uncertainty around availability.
- Shipments are still arriving. Most of their products are sourced in Canada.
- Have changed the way they do business to reduce store traffic. Customers are calling in orders and being met at the door.
- Grower customers are less worried now that they know that the store will remain open.

Anticipated Impact

- Will have reduced capacity if staff must stay home due to sickness. If short-staffed, may have to reduce fertilizer blending activities and limit the number of fertilizers in each blend.

E.S. Cropconsult Ltd (Integrated Pest Management Consulting - Service Provider)

Heather Meberg

s.22

heather@escrop.com

Current Impact

- Uncertainty around grower clients committing to their contracted services this year. Have lost a few clients, including three grower clients who were planning to ship blueberries to China.
- Staff will be starting weekly berry crop monitoring activities April 6. They are using extra social distancing measures, with each employee taking their own vehicle to the fields rather than carpooling.

Anticipated Impact

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- The use of single occupancy vehicles may double travel reimbursement costs for the year.
- Economic impact to the company if their services are not deemed essential.

Farmer Markets

Prepared by Karina Sakalauskas, Industry Specialist, Emerging Markets

Current Impacts

- Many farmers markets (FM) remain closed.
- Fewer vendors at farmer's markets
- FM are not yet defined as essential services **RESOLVED** with the provincial essential services designation for Farmer's markets
- Revenue loss from closed farmer's markets
- Uncertainty in decision making

Anticipated Impacts

- Declining FM operating revenues and FM financial viability
- Labour shortage
- Business continuity
- Economic impact

AGRI RESPONSE:

Lindsay Bisschop, Director Partnerships and Outreach, BCAGRI. Lindsay.bisschop@gov.bc.ca

- Press release from the Ministry of Agriculture supporting markets going virtual through the BC Farmers' Markets Online initiative.
- BCAFM proposal: Online Farmer's Market Strategy featuring the Local Line platform is being supported by AGRI.
- AGRI will provide \$55,000 to support BCAFM members in going online. The goal is to try to get 70 markets online. It is unknown whether markets will choose to go online and/or are ready to go online, hence it is wise to re-assess the expansion of this project in the future.
- Platform features:
 - Each participating farmers' market will receive their own 'store/market' website landing page.
 - Each market will work with their own vendors to list those vendors and the products they have available to sell.
 - Vendors who sell food or other products on the website will receive direct payments via this online platform and link to store/market website, Facebook and other digital channels.
 - BCAFM will promote Buy BC from the platform.
- s.13

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Outreach

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Food Processing

Prepared by James Street, Manager, Food Processing

Current Impacts

Overall Competitiveness:

- Positive change: Liquor law changes to allow restaurants to sell alcohol as take out and delivery with the purchase of a meal has been reported as beneficial to beverage companies who rely heavily on restaurant sales.
- BC Companies who focused their sales on food services, catering, experiential industries (Cruise ships), or tourist activities have been hit the hardest. High value product categories, retail bulk items, seafood products, and artisanal wineries/breweries continue to experience declines in sales.
- Product categories such as meat, snacks, beverage, baked goods, confections and pet foods, especially those who have focused their sale on retail channels have not been hit as hard. Some are experiencing higher sales volumes than usual (up to 40%) and struggle to maintain staffing to meet the demand
- BC companies are exposed to heavy erosion of margins as surpluses form, unsold inventories climb and production logistics become inefficient.

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- Economic impacts are starting to become larger within the community of larger companies as many have had US orders cancel and/or reduce production to match staffing capacity.
- Impacts will increase in the next 30 to 60 days resulting from declines in overall food spend by consumers. Some relief will start as retailers work to ensure shelves stay full and opportunities to source local may be explored
- Impacts to exports not limited to drops in overall demand as events and consumer activities decline. Port congestion and competition for logistical services has the potential to continue the minor delays of food exports overseas. US exports showing minimal disruptions.
- Some firms can distribute independently or sell through online channels. Home delivery options are quickly reaching capacity. Labour shortage limit potential of this option
- Firms are increasingly concerned about exposure to rapidly rising balances in 30/60/90 receivables; firms have low confidence in the ability of their customers to pay.

Staffing/Production:

- Increasing Issue - Limited access and low inventories of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) reducing the number of FTE's reporting to work
- Increasing Issue – PPE procurement causing some confusion; industry looking for guidance on which provincial agency is coordinating PPE supplies
- Remote work is being established for appropriate personnel.
- Protocols are being established to ensure key production staff are available to keep capacity from declining. Smaller firms seeking guidance material
- Reports from industry state that existing production crews are working hard to fill the gaps.
- Some larger firms are down to skeleton staffing and further reduction may result in reduced output.
- CFIA has issued a statement confirming that critical services will be maintained. i.e. inspection of animal slaughter, exports and imports
- Companies who rely on new immigrant labour and those who are seeking their permanent residence are reporting that they are experiencing production disruptions because this population is returning to their country of origin
- Lack of carpooling due to social distancing measures and worker safety concerns is greatly reducing the availability of workers in the meat slaughter and processing sector

Anticipated Impacts

Overall Competitiveness:

- Continued concern regarding availability of ingredients to BC Food processors as companies look to ensure business continuity. It is assumed that many companies are drawing from existing inventories and we are continuing to monitor the flow of trade across the border.
- Some items such as cleaning agents are experiencing shortfalls as shipments are denied.
- Farmers Market season (26 week – mid April to Mid October) is fast approaching and a delay in the holding of large events may erode the overall profitability of the smallest and most vulnerable food processing companies that rely on this as a sole means of revenue for the year.
- Smaller companies are vulnerable to cumulative impacts if the COVID 19 impacts overlap with business interruptions due to flood and/or fire season this summer.
- Many owner/operator companies do not have the option to keep production going due to disruptions in day care, schools and or other closures to primary services and infrastructure.

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- **Staffing/Production:** Many smaller firms have slowed and/or are planning to limit production and laid off employees. Commissary kitchens expect some clients to halt operations soon as demand slows down further.

Longer term considerations:

- Declining loonie increases the cost of imports and further erodes margins prolonging economic recovery – particularly small and medium sized food processing businesses – approx. 2300 in BC
- Access to business continuity supports or credit/financial products may assist short term cashflow problems but leave smaller companies with unsustainable levels of debt
- Food hub Implementation is anticipated to be delayed. Construction timelines are intact yet membership and uptake by industry is forecasted to be modest as a result of current decline in economic activity
- Ability of industry to respond, purchase and attend to support mechanisms such as physical workshops is anticipated to be severely limited
- Firms focused on sales to food services, catering services, event, experiential industries (like cruise ships), or tourist oriented food and beverage processors are experiencing a greater disruption and impact to their business.
- Food and Beverage processors, on the whole or as a portion of their operation, who focus on higher end products will experience a steeper decline in sales.

AGRI Response:

- Ministry staff working to assist the sector in developing and sharing best practices, guidelines, contacts and resource materials
- Continued engagement across the sector with key stakeholders and sector associations

Industry Response:

- BC Food and Beverage (BCFB) holding virtual town halls to communicate best practices and triage concerns.
 - Event has been broadcasted sector wide – outside of paid membership
 - Daily communication between Ministry staff and BCFB
- Ministry contractors have volunteered time to assist with outreach, collect insights/data and share information with Ministry staff
 - Survey results of quantitative impacts
 - Daily calls to validate issues and determine immediate and long term impacts
- Independent contractors in the Food processing sector holding webinars and creating ad hoc food distribution systems
 - Grounded Strategies – Webinar
 - Good to Grow Natural Food Products/ YVRPrep – online food platform

Outreach

BC Food & Beverage (BCFB)

James Donaldson, CEO

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Food and Beverage Service

Prepared by Emily Schulz, Manager, Market Development

Current Impacts

- Restaurants shifting business models to meet constraints: take-out/delivery, retail, meal-kits, bundled grocery packs, pre-made cocktails, etc.
- Major chains Earls and Joey have rolled out 'Earls Grocery' and 'Joey Market Place', retailing items from their supply chain (toilet paper to produce packs to house made sauces).
- Food Delivery services (Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes, Door Dash, etc.) working on massive administrative backlog due to volume of restaurants signing up.
- Worked with licensing to allow food delivery services (Skip, Uber, etc.) to immediately allow liquor delivery, have a 4-week window to acquire Serving It Right licenses.
- Attorney General, David Eby, announced the measure allowing all licensed foodservice establishments to sell liquor products for take-out and/or delivery until at least July 15, 2020.
- Supply chain interruptions creating issues for businesses remaining open – creates opportunities for increase in local sourcing (if available).
- Unsure of long-term ability to keep staff employed for delivery and take-out services.
- Potential for access to cleaning and sanitation supplies affected by supply chain issues.

Anticipated Impacts

- Restaurants shifting business models to meet constraints: take-out/delivery, retail, meal-kits, bundled grocery packs, pre-made cocktails, etc.
- Major chains Earls and Joey have rolled out 'Earls Grocery' and 'Joey Market Place', retailing items from their supply chain (toilet paper to produce packs to house made sauces).
- Food Delivery services (Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes, Door Dash, etc.) working on massive administrative backlog due to volume of restaurants signing up.
- Worked with licensing to allow food delivery services (Skip, Uber, etc.) to immediately allow liquor delivery, have a 4-week window to acquire Serving It Right licenses.
- Attorney General, David Eby, announced the measure allowing all licensed foodservice establishments to sell liquor products for take-out and/or delivery until at least July 15, 2020.
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Outreach

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Thursday, April 2, 2020

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture, 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

BC Restaurant and Foodservice Association (BCRFA)

Ian Tostenson, CEO

itostenson@bcdfa.com, 1-604-986-1429

Operations:

- No ability to collect association dues for the foreseeable future;
- Anticipate two years of operations without any revenue;
- All staff are working remotely;
- Interfacing with industry through www.bcdfa.com, social media channels, HR supports, email correspondence and phone calls; and,
- Corporate partners likely not to feed into revenue streams this year due to their own financial setbacks.

Feedback from Industry:

- Temporary foreign workers issue – on hold due to everything being closed, anticipate this will come back once business returns to normal.
- Threat of becoming a non-essential industry (Ontario moving legislation forward for everything 'not-essential' to close).
- Unsure of how they will receive a cash injection to get them back online, employees currently collecting EI won't be able to return without it.
- Rent and mortgage deferrals not as easy as they seem:
 - Many stipulations involving the term cycle that discount many mortgage holders (too new/too close to end of term)
 - Deferral terms may not be feasible (currently no guarantee of cash flow/injection in the industry)
- BCRFA Member Survey (3,000 surveyed with 300 respondents so far)
 - Shifting business models:
 - 45% already offered take-out/delivery before COVID
 - 25% started offering take-out/delivery since
 - Greatest concerns:
 - 76% concerned about deferred rent/mortgages
 - 65% concerned about where a cash influx will come from for forgivable loans
 - 55% concerned about needing cash influx to maintain staff
 - Staffing
 - 91% have had to let go of their staff, most was 150 people in one establishment

Organic

Prepared by Karina Sakalauskas, Industry Specialist, Emerging Markets

Current Impacts

- Concern of farmers and workers about risks to their health

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- Closure of farmer's markets (ongoing)
- Revenue lost from closed farmers markets/ restaurant /sales outlets
- Closure of restaurants, hospitality affecting food distribution and sales (ongoing)
- Supply shortage (containers/bins for community supported agriculture, inputs)
- Uncertainty in decision making

Anticipated Impacts

- Declining operational revenue and financial capacity
- Delay in audit inspections (Organic certification)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortage
- Labour shortage (Temporary Foreign Workers Program and WWOOF)
- Lack /loss of labor: worker's fears of working among others, inability of employers to provide labour due to social distancing restrictions
- Challenges in distribution and labour for small farmers (ongoing)
- If this situation continues or escalates further, it is expected to have a significant economic impact for the organic sector.

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Current Impacts

- News of outbreak in Kelowna nursery concerns farmers and workers. Need to develop immediate contingency plans, more discussion needed.
- Concerns about distribution through Community Shared Agriculture programs. Directions are needed on how to continue operations and additional precautions that must be followed. For some growers CSA model represents about 40-50 % of their revenue.
- Need guidance on COVID-19 Best Management Practices in Food Safety.
- Labour shortage
- Lack of distribution channels
- Supplies shortage
- Guidance needed on how to postpone AGMs (legal requirements) **RESOLVED:** AGRI provided information to stakeholders by reaching out to BC Registry Services

Anita Georgy

Executive Director FarmFolk CityFolk (FFCF)

director@farmfolkcitfolk.ca Phone: 604 730 0450-ext.302

- 97 responses received from BC farmers from a survey sent out on March 18th, 2020 and closed on March 24th.
- The survey was circulated via FFCF newsletter list, media channels, and via partner organizations.

Final report is posted here: https://www.farmfolkcitfolk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FFCF-Covid-Report_April2020.pdf

Survey questions:

- 1) How is your farm business being impacted right now?
- 2) What impacts do you anticipate this year?
- 3) What support do you need right now?
- 4) What support do you anticipate needing this year?

Four key themes emerged from the survey responses including:

Financial considerations:

- 47% reported immediate losses from restaurant, event, market, and farm gate sales. 10% reported an increase in direct to consumer sales. 73% anticipated future losses which could result from further income loss of consumers.
- Requests for immediate and long-term financial support.

Labour:

- 14% reported it as an immediate concern while 28% anticipated it as a future issue

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Accessing and finding sales channels:

- Immediate and long-term loss of sales anticipated for outlets such as restaurants requires shift to online and other direct to consumer sales. 28% requested immediate support for communications and marketing, while 30% could use help finding sales outlets. Solutions and support should be adapted for each community and style of farming.

Communications campaign:

- 16% asked for support in developing public education programs regarding local food and marketing of their specific products
- Goal is to inspire strong consumer confidence for food safety

Other Themes"

- Support for mental health, guidance on stocking up on supplies due to uncertainty about supply chains later in the year, financial burden early in the season before revenues start coming in.

Final report is posted here: https://www.farmfolkcitifyfolk.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/FFCF-Covid-Report_April2020.pdf

Retail

Prepared by Éliane Verret-Fournier, Manager, Market Development

Current Update/Status

- During the pandemic, retail food and grocery stores play an essential service in every community by ensuring safe and reliable access to food, supplies and other provisions.
- On March 29, the B.C. government issued a **Guidance to retail food and grocery stores operating during COVID-19** outlining **key steps for retailers** to put in place and to help interpret the recent public health orders. [Learn more.](#)
- The PHO's order prohibiting **mass gatherings of 50 or more people does not directly apply to the retail food and grocery industry**. In large grocery stores where it is feasible to have more than 50 people present at one time, it is permissible to do so provided that appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.

Current Impacts

- Staff is engaged with large BC retailers to identify current and evolving areas where we might be able to redirect local food supplies should demand/opportunities exist.

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- Retail stores are looking at ways to increase capacity. Based on a real-time Canadian Grocer survey, the biggest COVID-19-related fulfillment issues experienced by retail:
 - Cannot keep store shelves stocked due to intense customer demand. 38%
 - Certain products (i.e., household cleaners and paper products) are sold out/unavailable in our supply chain. 38%
 - Cannot keep up with surge of online orders. 15% Online orders are running at 3 times the normal levels.
 - Disruption in flow of goods sourced outside Canada 6.5%
 - This has not been an issue for our organization. 2.5%

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

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Commodity Outreach

HORTICULTURE

Berries

Prepared by Carolyn Teasdale – Industry Specialist, Berries

Events Affected

Current Impacts

- Labour shortages are being felt by the berry industry. Local farm workers are not coming in to work on some berry farms due to concerns about risks to their health.
 - Suggested solution: allow local farm workers to earn supplemental income on top of EI benefits as an incentive to come work on farms.
- Delays in temporary foreign workers are also impacting the completion of farm work.
- Growers are reporting a shortage of portable toilets to rent.
- Growers are reporting that they are unable to get respirator fit training/testing for themselves and their workers
 - Suggested solution: workers who had a respirator fit to them last year be allowed to use this year without re-testing.
- Industry is starting to work on standard operating procedures on berry farms to minimize the health risk to local workers.
- Industry is participating in BCAC Labour Calls to develop protocols for temporary foreign workers.
- Berry Council/Association offices are closed to visitors and meetings are being done by conference calls or online.
- Berry Council/Associations are communicating COVID-19 updates to growers and industry stakeholders.
- Berry breeding activities are being impacted due to closures at AAFC in Agassiz. Efforts are being made to minimize risks to the program.

Anticipated Impacts

- Growers may face prohibitive costs associated with charter flights and quarantining of temporary foreign workers.
 - Suggested solution: the province could provide quarantine spaces (schools, recreation centres) to house incoming temporary foreign workers for their 14 day quarantine period.
 - Suggested solution: temporary foreign workers qualify for EI for their 14 day quarantine period following arrival, as most are returning workers who have paid into EI in the past.
- The impact of labour shortages will continue to intensify as the growing season progresses. The berry industry estimates that it employs over 10,000 workers, including 2300 foreign workers (SAWP & TFW) who were expected to arrive by May-June. Labour is required for crop protection, field preparation for new plantings, irrigation checks, hand harvesting and packing/processing. Harvest (late May to November) is the most critical time for labour.

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- Continued shortage of portable toilet rentals will impact worker safety and compliance with food safety requirements, particularly during the harvest season.

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Cannabis/Hemp

Prepared by Rajiv Dasanjh – Industry Specialist, Emerging Markets

Current Impacts

- Legal-market medium to small-scale cannabis-producers have noted serious concerns over business continuity.
 - Many have stated that they are not able to access support-programming from BDC or FCC. Applicants are awaiting a final statement from BDC executive on their standpoint in working with Cannabis producers in regard to COVID-19 financial-support. FCC has stated that it is primarily only serving existing clients and is preferring to work with portfolio companies and companies with 3 consecutive quarters of positive cash-flow. This would not allow many new medium and small scale Cannabis producers that have recently entered the legal-market in the last year to meet these requirements, and to participate in business-continuity programming.
 - These producers have also stated they cannot access wage-subsidy programming recently offered by the CRA, because they cannot show an adequate decline in sales due to COVID-19. The loss in cashflow and halt in investment, coupled with COVID-19 impacts may see many businesses exit out of the legal-cannabis sector in BC in 2020.
- Large and small-scale cannabis-producers have noted concerns over business continuity. Many stated they are not able to access enhanced support-programs through BDC and FCC.
- Medium to small-scale operations have noted they will not have the financial ability to continue amidst a down-turn in the sector already occurring prior to COVID-19. Programming availability to Cannabis is a topic currently being addressed by JEDC and PSSG working-groups.
- Large-scale, indoor-cannabis producers have minimized staffing within greenhouse and packaging facilities, as per maximum-gathering restrictions of Health Canada regulations
- All non-essential staff (not related to production) have been directed to work from home; despite cannabis and CBD sales; illegally, legally, and pharmaceutically having been stated to have increased
- Indoor-cannabis operations are practicing workplace distancing efforts in circumstances where staff are in close-quarters with each other. Some indoor operations have issued distancing policies between employees, and greatly reduced occupancy capacities in rooms related to production or packaging to be below 5 individuals.
- Greenhouse-related Personal-Protective-Equipment (PPE) necessary for WorkSafe requirements such as gloves, sanitizers, and respirators have been noted to be in short-supply, as they are being re-directed towards Health Care in good will by Cannabis corporations.
- Licensing and regulatory processes for many producers and processors awaiting Health Canada correspondence has stopped. Many applicants are worried that business start-up dates will be further extended, to where many may not have the financial-ability to wait in becoming operational, as large capital-investments were prerequisites for applying.

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- Cannabis-retail outlets have been approved to remain open in BC's essential service list; cannabis-production operations will continue to the best of their abilities during COVID-19 closures.
- Cannabis is included on BC's list of essential-services under the header "Retail"; cannabis-production operations have continued to operate in interpretation this. Cannabis-production is not explicitly stated in the list of essential-services in BC being presented to the public. ID Specialist has suggested Cannabis-production be explicitly included, as it has been included alongside Cannabis-retail in other provinces' public-facing communications, such as Ontario ("Cannabis-retail and Cannabis-Production"). Cannabis-production was previously mentioned alongside cannabis-retail as being essential in an initial BC Provincial government news release, however this exact terminology is not reflected on the BC government's forward facing list of essential services at this time

Anticipated Impacts

- If Health Canada imposes even stricter gathering-size limitations, indoor cannabis producers would have to further minimize staffing
- It is uncertain if laid-off employees will return to work, or seek employment elsewhere after normal-production resumes
- A stop in Health Canada license-processing and approval for both cannabis and hemp applicants continues. This would put a major halt on any processing-capacity that was upcoming in 2020 for the sector, as well as production-increases anticipated for 2020. Any investments or debt related to operations in 2020 would be left outstanding.
- A major concern from large-scale cannabis-producers is that they will not be able to effectively staff their operations despite having increasing sales of their products.
- BC's ability to enhance the legal-market of cannabis, and entry of legacy-producers will be greatly impacted, as many operations in the legal-market may now be forced out of the sector due to a combination of economic down-turn, and COVID-19 containment efforts.
- Medium to small-scale cannabis producers in BC are suggesting that policy on farm-to-gate sales be expedited at this time, as this would allow them to increase their sales amidst increasing demand for their product, and counter-balance not having access to support programming and COVID or pre-COVID economic impacts.

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Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Field Vegetables

Prepared by Susan Smith – Industry Specialist, Field Vegetables

Current Impacts

- Looking to repurpose stored Kennebecs from food services to other markets. This is due to restaurants closing.
- Local on-farm labour shortages are being encountered by BC grower/packers who have lost their crews due to transport logistics and fears of safety at work. The physical distancing required is challenging for contractors who transport these workers to the farms. The family members of these workers are getting the message from the public health officers to stay home. These crews are needed right now for washing, grading and packaging of storage crops (vegetables) that are currently in demand in the local marketplace.
- Existing temporary foreign nationals that are already in British Columbia and that are due at some point to leave due to residency/immigration rules should be allowed to stay if they wish to.
- This has been mentioned, but want policy developed to reflect that agriculture supply/value chain as an essential service.
- BCAC is receiving a large volume of requests from the media. Can this roll-up be used as a helpful tool to communicate out common messages from farmers?
- BCPVGA is a key grower association that is under-resourced to respond effectively to the volume of requests for survey information from province and federal government and non-government agencies.
- Challenge regarding lack of greenhouse vegetable specialist with the Ministry of Agriculture
- Individuals looking to repurpose product from disappearing food services channels (closure of restaurants). Looking for other retail channels such as institutions.

Business continuity – commentary from Industry

- Coordination of the two-way flow of communications is needed between industry and government on emerging needs, immediate and anticipated impacts.
- BCAC is asking how to centralize the flow of information between industry and government. Is there an opportunity to get the common messages back to the farmers that government is hearing about through the roll-up and also improve the interactions between BCAC and government in terms of the current information flow.
- Pest management advisory services to the field vegetable sector and other horticulture sectors, including crop monitoring and treatment recommendations, are considered as essential contracted services for agriculture.
- Canada US exchange rate has moved by 13% in the last week (March 20). Where contracts with suppliers for imported product are usually in place 2 to 3 weeks in advance, now looking at daily pricing to prevent loss (for non-BC product/crops). Vendors are also pro-rating the price of the supply.
- The costs of packaging, fertilizer is based on a rapidly changing US\$.
- Several storage vegetable crop farms are planting this week. BC is the first province in Canada to start producing due to our mild climate. Labour will be an early big issue. Cannot emphasize enough that if the importance of TFWP for the harvest. There are already activities being carried out in the field. Season extension cloth is being put on crops right now.
- In the BC vegetable farm community, there are a lot of experienced producers and core growers, food distributions systems, staff and grading equipment in place to handle the increased spike in demand for local product from local retailers.
- There is chaos in the retail sector, cannot keep product on the shelves.
- There is a commitment by the value chain to remain fully staffed (keep staff safe etc.); meet with staff routinely to coordinate things.
- Food service business for BC Fresh has dropped off by 80 to 80-90%. Currently looking to repurpose that product to other channels.

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- BC Fresh is working with national retailers in Western Canada to keep supplies flowing.
- Packaging requirements at the retail level currently requires additional labour at the pack-out stage. There is a thought that perhaps industry should go back to packing out product in cases to reduce that labour requirement.
- There is an opportunity to explore the feasibility of cooperation and crossover of pooled labour resources between sectors to meet immediate business needs.
- Some solutions to meeting drastically increasing supply demands in the marketplace could mean having buyers look at what is normally a lower priority product (*i.e.* a variety that they don't usually desire, a grade size that they don't usually buy) for their market needs. This could be done while still meeting basic, agreed-to standards for quality and food safety.

Anticipated Impacts

- Future availability of fertilizer inputs is uncertain.
- Pest management advisory services to the field vegetable sector and other horticulture sectors, including crop monitoring and treatment recommendations, are considered as essential contracted services for agriculture.
- Forecasting instability in the marketplace if the whole regulated sector (growers, licensed marketing agency and BCVMC staff) does not work together to repurpose produce that currently does not have a retail home due to food service channels closing.
- Ongoing concern regarding labour and access to foreign nationals with closure of Canadian border to Mexican and Caribbean citizens.
- Increased cost of inputs from the US and imported product due to increase in the exchange rate and diminishing power of the CAD.

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Grain/Oilseeds

Prepared by Lori Vickers, Regional Agrologist/Industry Specialist, Grains and Oilseeds

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Events Affected

- Canadian Seed Growers Association has cancelled their AGM schedule to be held in July 2020 in Winnipeg. This is significant as they had planned to have a ratification vote there for their entire membership to give direction to the proposed National Seed Organization.
- No impact thus far. BC GPA held their winter seminar March 10th with good attendance and no additional events planned until summer crop tours/AGM in July.

Current Impacts

- BC Field crop producers are still dealing with challenges from the 2019 harvest and many crops left out in the fields. There is concern about ability to get on fields in the spring to harvest, prepare fields and then seed a new crop. In particular, they are concerned about how road bans this spring will impact the spring field season.
- Rail car delivery to local elevators in the Peace remains slower than normal, but cars are moving
- CSGA updated that CFIA is pausing Seed Regulation Modernization work. CSGA moving to virtual updates on National Seed Organization progress and ratification vote for summer/ fall 2020

Anticipated Impacts

- Anticipated shortage of PPE required to move and handle dusty grain during unusual spring harvest (masks)
- Market prices and fluctuations
- Ability to export grain/oilseed overseas and across international borders. Flow of is declining as ships sit in port
- Potential for impacts sourcing crop inputs due to supply chain disruptions (i.e. fertilizers, seed)
- Inability to bring in foreign workers for farm labourer (those not brought in as part of the temporary farm worker program)

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Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

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Grape (Wine)

Prepared by Christina Forbes, Regional Agrologist

Events Affected

- Grower Day/AGM scheduled for April 9 postponed
- Concerns about labour shortage with TFW scheduled to arrive over the next few months.
- Labour shortage will impact all aspects of the growing season

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Key Responses from Industry

- It is essential that the following remain open:
 - Winery tasting rooms ability to operate as retail and direct sales space; cellar sales are a significant source of current and future revenues
 - BC Liquor stores
 - BCLDB
 - Closure of any of the above would be catastrophic for VQA wines
- Wineries are doing their best to adapt to restaurant closures:
 - free delivery, wine clubs, and other retail avenues being used to offset restaurant challenge
 - Working with health ministry for protocols for tasting and distributing this information to members
- Labour concerns—Temporary foreign workers are vital to the grape harvest
- Pitch to the minister: Expand buy BC—better time than ever to support BC Farmers and Processors

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Key Responses from Industry

- The main concern is the cancelation of events, closure of restaurants, and reduced traffic in tasting rooms (no tastings just direct sales)
- Spring releases would normally be kicking off shortly, but this marketing is being undermined
- The island largely has smaller scale growers and smaller wineries; they say they are more agile and are focusing sales efforts elsewhere
- Most Island growers on the island sell to wineries on the island and most wineries sell out on the island.
- Not being export or mainland focused is their advantage; the market here is not saturated and so sell primarily on the island
- Ensuring temporary foreign workers programs go ahead uninterrupted is essential

BC Grape Grower's Association

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Tyrion Miskell, Program Administrator

tyrion@grapegrowers.bc.ca

1-877-762-4652

Current Impacts

- Labour shortage is the major concern at the moment. Varying information coming in about whether TFW will be allowed
- Working with BCAC
- Decrease in revenues as winery tasting rooms closing. Some wineries have been changing their business model towards pick up options with little contact. Some wineries also operating restaurants are offering take out options.
- Industry is working on developing protocols and tools for bringing workers in and the isolation requirements. Federal guidelines released March 27 2020, awaiting provincial protocols.

Anticipated Impacts

- Thinking about how to plan and prepare for the logistics of isolation of workers should they be allowed into the country
- Long term labour shortage will have huge impacts on industry
- Decline in tourism will affect wineries and wine sales and winery restaurant business.

BC Wine Grape Council

Kate Durisek, Executive Director

Kathy Malone, Chair

info@bcwgc.org

250-809-7107

Current Impacts

- Have had to postpone their rollout of the Sustainable Winegrowing and Winemaking certification program (was to be rolled out April 1). This has impacted funding allocated to the program from AGRI and BCWGC \$80-90,000. This postponement includes major shifts to their workplan including removing workshops, seminars, and updates to guides.
- Concerns about TFW shortages and protocols for entry into Canada

Anticipated Impacts

- Certification is anticipating a one-year delay in the program, resulting in lost income of \$50,000. This loss of income will affect communication and marketing for the program and may decrease future interest from growers.
- Loss in revenues, in particular if the summer tourism season is lost. Cash flow loss of tourist season will impact production and harvest decisions. Will also result in lost levies to the BCWGC, some of these levies already committed to funding programs.
- Concern about TFW labour shortages. As the grapevines are beginning to progress through the first stage of development, the interruption of TFW program will create a graduated impact on farming. 2 weeks, manageable but not desired. 4 weeks, vineyards are behind, and we are ultimately playing catch-up. 6 weeks, crops are at

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total risk due to delayed or non-existent processes, increasing disease and crop failure. This crop failure would not only impact landowner's annual income but long-term effects with pertinent disease to the crops.

Greenhouse

Prepared by Nadia Mori, Regional Agrologist

Current Impacts

- Acute labour shortage – causing partial or full operation shut-downs
- Urgently need a public statement like seen about worksites at YVR
- Domestic work force is staying home due to pressure of public messaging
- Inability to bring foreign workers into the country due to challenging logistics
- Labour shortage (consistent across all feedback)
- Planned business expansions postponed indefinitely
- Uncertainty around availability of seasonal agricultural workers
- Looking for guidance on how to protect workers once they arrive and help them cope with situation; how to keep everybody safe and stress free.
- Delays in production cycle
- Expected losses due to shortened season
- Expected shortage of inputs: fertilizer, packaging materials
- Halted business expansions

Outreach

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Hazelnut

Prepared by Karina Sakalauskas, Industry Specialist, Emerging Markets

Current Impacts

- Farmers and workers concern about risks to their health
- Uncertainty in decision making
- Uncertainty around limited access and availability of supplies (potting media, fertilizers, bamboo sticks, etc.)

Anticipated Impacts

- Disruption in supply chains (potting media, pots, fertilizer, etc.) may reduce hazelnut trees available for fall planting.
- Potential for challenges in sourcing trees from Oregon as tissue cultured plantlets in May and June if shipping from US is affected.
- Concern in new growers and those interested in planting hazelnuts: price is a key factor in determining whether to move forward with planting, or to expand their current operations.
- As hazelnuts are an emerging industry, there is concern about the future of the sector under this evolving circumstance.
- Market prices and fluctuations.

Outreach

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Haskaps

Prepared by Rajiv Dasanjh, Emerging Markets Specialist

Current Impacts

- Current concern is over supply-chain management of production-related goods for the upcoming 2020 season, as many Haskap-producers are located in Central/Northern BC.

Anticipated Impacts

- Concern over transport-availability for harvests come late Spring. Trucking-transports are readily available during this time of year, but due to increased pressures or restrictions placed on supply-chains, there is concern that adequate transport-services will not be available for Haskap-harvest for 2020.

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Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

- Concern over labor-availability shortage in 2020 and COVID-19 containment efforts on local labor pools
- Farmers-market closures and moving to online-sales platforms. Haskap-producers were currently focused on bringing awareness of their crop to BC consumers; it is unclear if they will be able to reach any of the same sales in an online-setting with reduced customer-engagement.

Outreach

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Hops

Prepared by Rajiv Dasanjh – Industry Specialist, Emerging Markets

Current Impacts

- All BC breweries have closed and have either minimized or completely halted their production of new beer. Most breweries that have kept their operations running to some extent are selling older inventory, to where ingredients required for new brews is greatly reduced at this time.
- Members of the BCHGA have noted a major decrease or an abrupt stop to direct-sales of their crops, and are being forced to store 2019 harvests.
- Other members of the BCHGA that export their hops into Europe have noted a complete drop-off in communication from brokers in the EU, to where BC producers are also not able to export their crops at this time. This is likely due to EU containment efforts and border closures.

Anticipated Impacts

- Labor-shortages from the local labor-pool is to be an issue during COVID-19 containment efforts. Many regular-returning employees are choosing to remain at home at this time.
- If BC Breweries remain to be closed during COVID-19 containment, many hops-producers relying on revenue from selling their 2019 crops will face extreme financial-pressure in upcoming months.
- Many new, or recently established breweries may be forced out of business due to not having any revenue during spring of 2020. This would greatly reduce the direct-sales capacity of BC hops to local breweries in the long-term.
- Hops-brokers and breweries are selling and distributing 'old hops' to breweries still operating. This may result in a further glut of hops in 2020 in BC.
- ID Specialist to reach out to BC Craft Beer Association to see if exact reduction in production, and reduction in hops-usage can be quantified at this time. This may give the BCHGA the opportunity to approximate a "lag" in production-shortage before early summer and tailor production capacity.

Outreach

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Mushrooms

Prepared by Kim Sutherland, Regional Agrologist

Event Cancellations

- Learning conferences cancelled
- Planned upgrades to improve production have been put on hold
- Expansion plans on hold

Current Impacts

- Heavy drop in sales for one producer, huge increase for another producer that has since dropped off, so volatility in retail sales, retail in US not as strong as in BC
- Restaurant sales have dried up
- Rapid changes in orders, hard to predict or plan
- Suppliers requiring strict payment terms
- Shortages of products such as masks, hand sanitizers and gloves
- Concern work force will drop off due to constant messaging to stay home and fear of illness although stepped up sanitization/worker protection measures

Anticipated Impacts

- Reduction in production
- Reduction of labour force as people stay home
- If too many staff stay home will not be able to harvest all of product

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- Existential concern is a closure of the US border which would be a large impact as so much product goes to US

Outreach

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Nursery
Prepared by Nadia Mori, Regional Agrologist

- Looking for clarification on whether ornamentals and cut flowers are considered an essential service

Outreach

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Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Treefruit

Prepared by Christina Forbes, Regional Agrologist

Current Impacts

- The urgent priority of the horticulture sector is seeking an exemption on the travel ban for foreigners to Canada such that the Mexican and Caribbean SAWP programs and the Temporary Foreign Worker - Ag Stream workers can enter Canada under new isolation protocols.
- The urgent priority, now that Temporary Foreign workers are allowed into Canada is determining the process and logistics for entry (including flights and isolation protocols upon arrival and during their stay). Urgently requesting for more information on rules for entry and isolation. There is a need for more workers on the ground immediately.
- Open Burning restrictions issued March 26/20 for high smoke zones will have an immediate impact to producers that are currently working on replanting of orchards. Federal government released guidelines for protocols, some of which the BCFGA will be asking for changes too. Provincial protocols yet to be released.
- Fruit packing facilities (currently still packing apples) have no demand from food service distribution. Restaurant closures having a major impact.

Anticipated Impacts

- Impacts on tree fruit growers of late or no arrival of Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) foreign workers:
- if 2 weeks late: 5-10% reduction in revenue due to quality impacts
- if 4 weeks late 10-20% reduction in revenue due to quality impacts
- if 6 weeks late 20-30% reduction in revenue due to quality impacts
- if no arrival, 75% reduction in total tree fruit farm gate revenue, 75% of \$118 million = \$89 million
- The solution being developed nationally is to implement isolation protocols and gain an exemption from the travel ban for SAWP and TFW-Ag Stream workers.
- Reduction in foreign tourist workers (under the International Experience Canada Program), mainly at harvest time,
- if no arrival, 15% reduction in total tree fruit farm gate revenues, 15% of \$118 million = \$18 million
- The possible solution is to get local workers out, but assistance would be needed in training, placing, and ensuring safety of these local workers.
- Currently, 2 flights to the Okanagan on Wednesday are immediately impacted - workers will be refused boarding on those flights.
- Depending on the process that is determined for entry there may be increased costs for flights and isolating the workers.
- Labour shortages may still be a concern if reduced numbers are permitted in dorm facilities
- Shortage of PPE availability for workers (on farm and in processing facilities)
- Increased costs for alternative disposal of vegetative debris from orchard removal. Current chipping programs offered by the regional districts in the Okanagan have lengthy waiting lists.
- Increased demand for bagged product (assumes due to less handling) over bulk tray product. This will have financial impact as bagged product tends to be smaller and of lower grade and sold at a discount.
- Trade shows cancelled eliminating promotion of products
- New cherry and apple line in one facility ordered and on track but concern about installation as they can't bring technicians in from Holland, New Zealand, Chile. Delays in getting the equipment here and installation will have a major impact on production this season.

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Outreach

The above information was collected in collaboration with the contacts below.

Glen Lucas
General Manager
BC Fruit Growers' Association
250-762-5226 (ext. 2)

Sukhpaul Bal / Beth Cavers
BC Cherry Association
250-317-8529

David Geen
Jealous Fruits
250-878-3025
Creston cherry grower
Don Low

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Current Impacts

- An organized sales medium (outlet) for farmers, ranchers and food processors that may be impacted by diminished or evaporated sales is needed ASAP.
- Connect to rural economy consumers via Facebook, Instagram, community information pathways
- Non-traditional local food consumers, or make it easier to connect producers/processors with local consumers (rural economies/communities)
- Business continuity – commentary from Industry overall
- Current Federal COVID-19 business support does not apply to many producers, food processors or aggregate retailers

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

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ANIMAL

Aquaculture

Prepared by Darah Gibson/Myron Roth – Industry Specialists, Marine Fisheries, Aquaculture & Seafood

Current Impacts

- BDC and Federal Assistance funding has told industry that they aren't eligible
- Farm Credit Canada's eligibility is complicated as it includes requiring businesses to be eligible for a loan - as a result of COVID-19, many growers are not in a financial position to be eligible – in theory FCC is working with the aquaculture sector.
- Shellfish growers dependent on the food service industry have seen sales go down to zero
- Small operators, shellfish and land-based finfish require capital to pay for operating costs.
- s.21
- Some confusion over the recently announced hydro subsidy – and how it will be applied to small business.
- Implementation of social distancing increases producer cost to ensure staff can be on site to look after farm stock.

Anticipated Impacts

- Without immediate designation of the seafood production as an essential service, many companies will have to lay off staff, losing stock if they don't have staff for animal husbandry and in some cases, bankruptcy. **RESOLVED** with the provincial essential services designation for fisheries and aquaculture.
- The 10% wage subsidy will not provide enough relief for growers. **RESOLVED** with the federal announcement to increase the subsidy to 75%.
- Unless the cash flow/operating capital issue is addressed soon – several shellfish growers and most private land-based finfish growers will be at a serious risk of bankruptcy within a couple of months. Even if bankruptcy is avoided, there is a lack of capital to buy seed stock (eggs, juveniles) which will impact future production and economic viability in the long-term.

Outreach

Shellfish

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Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

- Ministry of Environment is maintaining the requirement for effluent sampling during COVID-19 after many seafood processors have asked to put this sampling on hold for the time being
- Consultant and industry feel that prior decades of effluent entering the ocean produced no documented evidence of any adverse impact to the environment
- Continued sampling for ENVR is every 2 weeks and can cost a processor \$1,500 to \$3,000 per month. It also poses a risk to employees to have consultants coming in or staff delivering samples to the lab. This process is thought to be an unnecessary cost to seafood processors during COVID-19.
- There are upcoming permit requirements for processors which can cost them up to \$3,000 for a consultant and permit fees – Industry is asking for an extension with these deadlines
- Industry has been told by ENVR that if they don't continue sampling, they will have to declare that they are out of compliance and they will review if enforcement is required – Industry is asking that ENVR declare temporary emergency waivers for some permit requirements to avoid non-compliance and bad public relations

Skipper Otto Community Supported Fishery

Sonia Strobel, Co-Founder & CEO

sonia@skipperotto.ca; 778-689-1319

Please note that Sonia has requested that this information not be publicly released

Current Impacts

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Organic Ocean

Dane Chauvel

dane@organicocean.com; 604-312-8884

Current Impacts

- Currently planning for a worst-case scenario – working with FishSafe and WorkSafeBC for assistance and protocols
- Have a limited inventory of Personal Protective Equipment for staff but won't be enough
- Have enough storage of cleaning agents and supplies for a while but there's a shortage of antiseptic wipes and hand sanitizers and need thermometers to temperature screen staff

Anticipated Impacts

- Border closures and trade impacts – will require support throughout supply chain systems

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- Exploring financial assistance options and shifting to a social enterprise to ensure food flows where it's required on a cost recovery basis with any additional financial benefit directed at providing food to vulnerable groups.
- Concerns over Provincial fines of up to \$50,000 for not practicing social distancing.

InterCity/Albion Farms and Fisheries

Vince Athey

604-875-9424

Current Impacts

- As a purchaser of clams, mussels and oysters in Western Canada, over 90% of oysters, clams and mussels for Food Service
- Have stopped purchasing all oysters, clams and mussels indefinitely
- InterCity/Albion presently has thousands of lbs of shellfish in the cooler that will need to be discarded

Bees

Prepared by Aaron Mackay – Resource Development Agrologist

Current Impacts

- Lack of sugar for bulk purchasing through traditional vendors. Seeking new sugar vendors and/or direct relationships with distributors **(Resolved)**
- Cancellation of shipments of bee and queen stock from other countries.

Anticipated Impacts

- Lack of bee colonies in province to meet pollination requirements of some industries
- Travel restrictions between or within provinces would threaten business viability and leave beekeepers unable to fulfill contracts

Outreach

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Bison
Prepared by Taylor Jeffery – Industry Technologist, Livestock

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Noticed an increase of bison meat purchased directly from producers
- Increase in demand of bison meat in the USA
- Currently no impacts accessing feed
- However multiple reports from northern producers are noting a feed shortage
- No issues accessing processing facilities

Anticipated Impacts

- As the economy continues to decline BCBA is anticipating the public will stop purchasing expensive cuts of meat (such as bison)
- Potential for a loss of income for producers and members of the BCBA
- Concerns with boarder closure as many BC bison are sold to the USA
- Anticipating an issue with getting workers to facilities in leu of self isolation

Outreach

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Cattle

Prepared by Laura Code – Industry Specialist, Beef and Livestock;

Events Affected

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

- Canadian Beef Industry Conference (Aug 11-13, 2020) postponed to 2021.
- Cancelled BC Beef Day BBQ (or postponed to fall); would like to keep meetings as scheduled and review possibility closer to the time.

Current Impacts

- Cattle markets being hit hard this week.
- Auctions continue to operate, under strict conditions and limiting numbers of people; encouraging telephone bidding and livestreaming of auctions.
- Cattle groups encouraged by declaration of essential services; some questions coming back regarding details.
- Feedlots (Alberta) - Employee shortages developing (as employees self-isolate and decide to stay home).
- Larger packing plants running full shifts and looking to increase operation to 6 days/week; will require a lot more labour. CFIA liaising with individual plants with respect to inspectors.
 - Continues to be improved; CFIA provided guidance document on website, *COVID-19 Guidance Documents for Meat Slaughter and Processing*: <https://inspection.gc.ca/covid-19/cfia-information-for-industry/guidance-to-meat-slaughter-and-processing-establishments/eng/1585620151816/1585620617343>
 - Harmony Beef plant (Alberta) shut down last week due to positive testing of employees; did cleanse over the weekend and some staff in isolation; back up and running as of Tuesday, March 31.
 - Pennsylvania, US plant (Ontario producers depend on it) shut down for 2 weeks as entire management sick with COVID.
- Market impacts of stock market declines has led to volatile calf prices and potential financial implications for beef producers. Some indication of stabilizing, with prices rebounding the last few days.
 - Backgrounders and grasser may need support, but minimal anticipated at this time.
- Increased demand for cows for ground beef. Higher value cuts normally destined for restaurant market may need to be diverted to retail. Increased demand for retail and grocery stores.
- Organizations providing COVID-19 resources and links on their websites: BCCA, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, National Association of Cattle Feeders
- Beef associations communicating with members to gather insight as to impacts as well as to provide biosecurity information to members. Includes messaging from AgSafeBC for worker safety.
- BC Beef Brand discussions continue, and brand may become accelerated to capture consumers wanting more local product.
- Request from Food Processing Specialist, Tiffany Guan, with respect to beef product request from institutional channels; limitation due to requirement of federally inspected facilities.

Anticipated Impacts

- Watching closely: Processing facilities - health of workers paramount. Work being done to keep impacts to slaughter facilities to a minimum. If virus shows up protocols are / are being put in place to address.
- Serious potential impact at national level: transportation of animals across Canada/US border. National agencies are monitoring impacts of border and trade. Currently not impacted.
- Branding season coming soon where producers will need 20-30 people to help. Potential to provide incentive for calf cradles, corrals built for calves, etc for reduced labour needs as well as enhanced animal welfare/biosecurity. Could tag reader program provided by Traceability be expanded to include these?
- Watching closely: WA state – high concentration of COVID – BC depends on WA-state packing plants

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- As the public experiences shortages or delays in access to supplies, may increase awareness and influence perspectives on the value of agriculture and food production in the province.
- Observations from grocery store shelves: meat aisle – high demand on beef/meat products, alternative plant-based products still relatively well-stocked.

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Dairy

Prepared by Tom Droppo, Dairy and Pork Specialist, and Taylor Jeffrey, Livestock Technician

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Biggest issue is rapidly developing labour shortages in some processing plants, which is reaching critical levels that could soon impact operations.
- A prominent processing plant that produces specialized ingredients to pharmaceutical companies are experienced a rise in order volumes, but are facing serious challenges of maintaining enough of a labour force just to meet current production levels.
- Economic uncertainty short and long term (e.g., customer orders).
- Supply chain disruptions (e.g., delayed deliveries, back orders with no clear delivery dates).
- Some suppliers to processing plants do not have Business Continuity Plans (BCP).
- Mainstream retail outlets have dramatically increased orders of dairy products, particularly fluid milk.
- BCMMB has issued incentive days of 2, 3 and 3 days for March, April and May in order to encourage greater BC milk production.
 - BCMMB has cancelled the days for April and May
- 'Estimates' from BCMMB indicate increased demand of ~30% for dairy products this week and next, with fluid sales up ~40% and industrial products up ~20%.
- All fluid plants running at or near capacity. Industrial plants are being shorted of milk by the increase in fluid sales, which requires that milk be diverted to fluid plants.
- Interprovincial movement of milk has increased to meet demand.
- Artisan cheese makers are being hit particularly hard as result of cancelled orders from key customers (e.g., restaurants, hotels) and the shut-down of farmer's markets (a primary outlet for product sales).
- Artisan cheese makers laying off from 50-100% of hired staff, curtailing production and in some culling of a portion of herds.

Anticipated Impacts

- Increased risk of plant operations being negatively impacted as labour shortages continue to escalate due primarily to employees staying away from work due to fear.
- Supply chain disruptions and labour shortages could negatively impact plant line processes and ability to fill dairy orders.
- Expect fluid milk demand to level out after initial two-week surge following COVID-19 outbreak.
- Milk production on-farm will increase and be more aligned with rise in demand.
- Rising concern with essential govt services remaining open for business shipments (e.g., CFIA for Health Certificates).
- Border closures (domestic and/or international) could negatively impact business depending on the ability of authorities to not restrict travel of essential supplies businesses.
- Significant and immediate reductions in artisan cheese business sales in forthcoming weeks. Resulting in additional staff layoffs.
- Business continuity of BC artisan cheese makers is in serious jeopardy due to continued loss of sales, and inadequate inventories of cheese being built up now to age and satisfy demand in 6-9 months.

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Goat

Prepared by Taylor Jeffery – Industry Technologist, Livestock

Current Impacts

- Multiple dairies have indicated significant financial loss
 - Agassiz Goat Dairy
 - The owners had a contract with Avalon who have reneged on their contract, causing the dairy to dump 10,000 liters of goat milk per week
 - Agassiz have dumped over 20,000 liters of milk to date
 - A result of this lack of income Agassiz has had to lay off all employees
 - 1200 animals with 400 does ready to kid reside on the dairy
 - Halt whistle Cheese Co. and Happy Goat Farm & Dairy
 - They just reduced their herd by 25% due to uncertainty if they could feed through the next few months due to the abrupt reduction in income.

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- They reduced their production by 40%
 - Laid off 3 FTE
 - Now moving to milking once a day as they cannot keep up with the workload after laying off the employees.
 - Most orders of cheese by restaurants have been cancelled (they sell to restaurants from Tofino to Victoria and into Vancouver)
 - Orders for several larger grocery store chains has stall or cancelled (Island and Mainland)
 - Cannot sell at Farmers Market due to two elderly parents at home and worried about bringing the virus home
- Fraser Valley Auction is upcoming (next week) and currently has not been canceled
 - Weekly auctions are still scheduled to run
 - Capacity limits have been set
 - Substantial impact on goat industry as the upcoming auction since the holiday of Ramadan is coming up, and cultural buying is a huge economic factor for the goat industry
 - This is when goat producers also expect to fetch the best price at the auction
 - Increased concerns over a growing hay and feed storages
 - BCGA will be sending out a survey to their members to gauge the impact of COVID 19 has had on individuals regarding their economic losses and other topics

Anticipated Impacts

- Significant impact if the auction is canceled, producers will lose a substantial amount of income
- Industry wide concern over the supply chain being affected by possible boarder closures
- High impact on hay/feed supplier if producers are bulk buying now, they will not need to restock as regularly later in the year

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Horse

Prepared by Taylor Jeffery – Industry Technologist, Livestock

Current Impacts

- RE: Harness Racing BC Board, Canadian Thoroughbred Breeders Association, HCBC and Great Canadian – resolutions still being discussed. Two conference calls held March 26, 2020 to discuss options.
- HCBC is currently drafting a summary of the meeting to bring to the Attorney Generals office. The primary concern is for allowing trainers/handlers/owners to continue exercising the horses on the track during this time
- This request would fall under the NFACC minimum standards of care:
 - Chapter 6, section 6.1: Turnout, Exercise and Social Opportunities for Equines “Exercise refers to physical activity (indoors or outdoors) and includes, but is not limited to, walking in hand, riding, lunging and hand grazing.”
- BC Racing Management Committee and HCBC are currently organizing a meeting between the Attorney Generals office and AGRI to discuss solutions.
- Every other track in Canada is currently allowing the continued training of horses on the tracks as long as COVID 19 protocols are followed.
- Great concern if horses are not allowed to be worked, they will lose condition and be unable to race post COVID 19, leading to the failure of the racing industry within BC.
- Impact survey results indicate that coming April 1st a large number of boarders within BC will be unable to pay bills related to the care of their equines
- Significant loss of income throughout the entire equine industry
- Insurance providers are no longer covering individuals who participate in equine events during BCs state of emergency

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- Equine sales have declined rapidly within Canada and across the border to the USA
- HCBC is still closely monitoring local feed stores and incoming feed supply levels
- HCBC have come to an agreement with BC Racing to allow occupants to remain on racetrack grounds until April 1st
- After April 1st a new agreement will be drafted, or all horses and trainers/owners/handlers will be required to evacuate

Anticipated Impacts

- HCBC is currently calculating the amount of lost revenue sustained due to COVID 19 by sending out an industry wide survey
- Initial results being reported as "grim"
- Estimates project to be in the millions for the loss of revenue
- Finding a mutual solution for the current racetrack situation or a contingency plan for going forward for animals located at the affected tracks is key
- Concerns growing of facilities/handlers capabilities to be able to provide care for equines, leading to compromised welfare
- Large biosecurity concerns for equine leaving the racetrack

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Marine Fisheries

Prepared by Darah Gibson – Industry Specialist, Marine Fisheries

Current Impacts

- Benefits for fish harvesters that have and will be experienced business impacts as a result of COVID-19 are not clear at this time.
 - Fishermen are concerned that if they can't fish, they will not be able to claim EI outside of the fishing season.
 - Commercial harvesters are not eligible for relief funds through BDC and FCC
- Harvesters are concerned with how to fish and process while keeping everyone safe. Discussions around safety protocols are starting within industry but they will require support designing protocols
 - *Central Coast communities are asking the province to help with stopping non-essential travel to their communities. These communities are remote with limited health care capacity to handle a COVID-19 outbreak. It is important for the commercial fishing industry to have support in creating safety protocols to protect themselves and the communities that they enter.*
- Companies and harvesters are concerned with how to fish and process while keeping everyone safe. Discussions around safety protocols are starting within industry but they will require support designing protocols
- Fisheries dependent on Asian markets (Dungeness crab and geoduck) have already experienced a loss of market January-March and experienced zero to minimal sales
- Fisheries dependent on food service (ex. Halibut) are experiencing a loss of markets and demand
- Fishing organizations are beginning to work together and have made an ask to AGRI to support a task force for seafood
- First Nations are concerned about economic and social impact of reduced fishing opportunities for their commercial fisheries and their Food, Social and Ceremonial fisheries.
- Fish harvesters have created a steering committee to organize their issues, needs and potential solutions
- Association leadership has been communicating COVID-19 updates to fishermen and industry stakeholders, but their reach has limits
- Some industry representatives have been actively engaging with AAFC's industry calls
- Some companies are having challenges procuring sanitizers, cleaners and personal protective equipment for workers. Public Safety Canada is working on best practices – AAFC hinted that this will include food production
- Some increase in demand from domestic retailers but the timeline of demand increase is uncertain
- Already experiencing limited cold storage availability
- One company is experiencing challenges with TFW
- Feel strongly about needing designation of an essential service – confusion over legality of going out fishing and seafood processing. AAFC has provided feedback that this decision will need to come from Provinces and Territories. Nova Scotia, Washington and Alaska have all included fishers and seafood processing as an essential service – this issue has been addressed

Anticipated Impacts

- Concerns over ability to provide safe environments for fishermen and fish plant workers.
- Labour concerns related to both keeping people employed and having access to healthy workers
- Concerns

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- Delays in inspection and at the border will have an impact on product quality and safety
- Potential impacts to on-board observer and dockside monitoring availability. Some fisheries require these observers as part of their conditions of licence, maintain eco-certifications and access to markets
- Concerns that if seafood production is not considered an essential service, companies may receive up to \$50,000 in Provincial fines for not practicing social distancing.

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Pork

Prepared by Tom Droppo – Industry Specialist, Pork and Taylor Jeffery, Livestock Technician

Current Impacts

- Meat orders to processing plants remain higher than normal, but still able to fill orders. No shortages yet.
- Several producers that supply direct to restaurants and/or butchers are running into cash flow issues as accounts payable by these businesses are not settled.
- Sporadic wholesale orders that are direct with several producers is causing uncertainty in terms of on-going sales and cash flows for these farms.
- Loss of ~90% of BC Asian market demand for light-weight barbecue hogs, which comprises ~25% of BC pork sales.
- Some reductions in labour force at plants, which is slowing production lines. Some workers / drivers electing to stay home.
- Plant inventory on some cleaning and sanitizing materials is under strain and/or running low, resulting from increase in orders experienced by suppliers.

Anticipated Impacts

- Potential labour shortage a major concern should more staff elect to stay home or be forced to self-isolate.

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- Sustained increase in meat orders combined with rising labour shortage could create challenges in filling orders.
- Increased monitoring of local supply chain (i.e., hog supply) to ensure enough hogs available to fill meat orders.
- Several producers may be forced to scale back production to offset lost direct market sales to restaurants and/or butchers and uncertainty with direct sales to wholesale customers.
- Loss of barbecue hog sales will result in either producers having to feed out these pigs to heavier market weights or culling if feed supply and space are an issue.

Outreach

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Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

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Poultry

Prepared by Clayton Botkin – Industry Specialist, Poultry

Events Affected

- Westvet and BC Poultry Symposium, planned for May 3 & 4, 2020 have been postponed.
- The BCPA Annual General Meeting is planned for March 30, 2020, now shifted to a conference call.
- Small Flock Poultry Health workshop planned for Metchosin on March 21, 2020 has been cancelled and will re-book once things calm.
- There was a duck workshop planned for Saltspring Island on March 28, 2020, which has been cancelled.

Current Impacts

- Chicken Farmers of Canada have allowed re-use of bedding to reduce immediate pressure on bedding supply chains. Access to new bedding for placements has become an issue nationwide. Allowing re-use of litter should free some supply for other commodities more dependent.
- Shavings suppliers have continued to indicate short supply.
- Jurisdictions outside of Canada are facing significant shortages of some poultry products. Canada's supply of poultry and eggs has remained strong, with no significant increases in price anticipated immediately. US egg prices have tripled in a little less than 2 weeks. Chicken supply in the US is also short.
- Hatcheries are facing challenges with social distancing on their lines. Following processing lead with seeking advice from the Federal government and CFIA on how to re-align staff.
- Poultry industry EOC is active and monitoring the situation. They will participate in weekly stakeholder calls and liaise with industry & allied trades. Current activation level is the Incident Commander s.22 and Liaison s.22.
- Industry alert level escalated to yellow to reduce cross-farm activities and create awareness among allied trades to follow elevated biosecurity protocols. Operating at yellow will also require increased on-farm biosecurity levels to hopefully reduce the potential for introduction for pathogens that could require a response.
- A representative of a non-supply managed processor advised that one of their squab producers has been forced to reduce their breeding flock by 50%. AGRI advised to follow guidance of veterinarian for humane slaughter and directed to BRM for financial programs.

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- Currently at normal operational status across industry. Some boards are accommodating staff for remote work, others have isolated offices and workplaces, as well as limited all visits.
- The poultry industry has an incredible ability to self-isolate, and self-quarantine, developed through various animal health disease outbreaks. Producers, stakeholders and allied trades are very aware of high-risk contacts and very familiar with mitigating strategies.
- Information is being shared with staff and producers as it comes regarding best practices.
- National agencies are monitoring impacts of border and trade, as well as consumption (where appropriate).
- Field staff are continuing their on-farm activities in a limited capacity and with full PPE to minimize potential exposures to farms and personnel.
- Demand for products has been high, processors and grading stations have been going at capacity to keep retail supplied.

Anticipated Impacts

- Significant concern across sector about continued access to PPE on the entire supply chain.
- Industry is monitoring impacts on plant operations nationally. Issues have arisen in Quebec where a large plant was delayed by half a shift due to refusals to work pending a Health Authority review. The impacts of a similar situation in BC could be significant.
- Producer input costs may be expected to face significant spikes. Pricing on feed in the west is based on wheat cost, as the primary ingredient. The east uses corn. The price of corn has sharply declined due to reduced competition from lower ethanol demand. This could create a significant competitive disadvantage to BC producers if the price of wheat continues to remain high as we continue to export product.
- All commodity boards and allied trades have highlighted a long-term anticipated challenge of accessing PPE. This could have a significant impact on any lines, as well as field staff doing inspections and testing. Although not urgent, this needs to be monitored as the situation progresses.
- There have been numerous reports of issues with access to shavings/bedding consistent with other sectors. Flag as an item of high importance. Estimated need has been provided and included in the prepared note sent up to Exec.
- All commodities, and the respective national boards are working on extreme contingency measures in accordance with Advance Planning units.
- Hatching Eggs highlighted concerns about implications of US border closures to hatching egg imports. Industry is considering extending the life of flocks as a tool to manage domestic supply if there is a long-term impact to closures.
- BC Egg highlighted concerns about border closures as well. Most of BC's pullet chicks come from US sources, so an extended closure could impact supply down the road. BC is a major importer of pullets, so an extended closure could have significant impacts on supply in long term.

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Seafood Processing

Prepared by Darah Gibson/Myron Roth – Industry Specialists, Marine Fisheries, Aquaculture & Seafood

Current Impacts

- More pressure to be including the entire seafood production chain as an essential service
- It is too early to quantify economic impacts. However, there were some fisheries (Dungeness Crab and Geoduck) impacted early on with outbreaks in China and Japan. Currently, halibut and farmed shellfish are experiencing significantly decreased orders due to dependence on the food service sector and US markets.
- There is a great deal of uncertainty in markets, labour, trade and consumer behaviour as more fisheries begin their seasons in the spring.
- The seafood processing sector is experiencing shortages in cleaners and sanitizers. Currently there is varied quality in contingency plans amongst processors. Cold storage is at a premium.
- Industry has requested that Province slow the Northern Shelf Bioregion marine planning initiative to allow them time to recover
- There are reports of Chinese and Japanese markets beginning to recover but logistics of processing and shipping are still uncertain.
- Domestic retail has increased their demand for fresh seafood now – a lot of uncertainty around this trend.

Anticipated Impacts

- Loss of market access with border closures and restrictions with travel
- Delays with inspection and at the border will impact product quality and shelf life
- Concerns over flight availability for export markets like China and Japan as they recover
- Labour availability/Worker safety – fish processing staff are an aging workforce, cleaning and sanitizing shortages; will businesses be able to keep paying staff
- Cold Storage Availability
- Distribution – will delivery staff continue to be available to work
- Concerns about Provincial fines of up to \$50,000 for businesses not practicing social distancing. This would shut seafood production down

Sheep

Outreach

BC Sheep Federation (BCSF)

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Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

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Feed

Tom Droppo, Industry Specialist - Dairy and Pork

Lori Vickers, Regional Agrolgist/ Grain & Oilseed Specialist

Current Impacts

- Experiencing delays in shipments of certain products for feed manufacturer due to delayed freight from origin.
- Office staff working from home; mill staff and truck delivery drivers continue to work as normal
- Uninterrupted and continued feed delivery to farms an area of concern.
- Looking for essential services designation
- Challenges with customers "panic buying" and stocking up on bagged feed
- Increase in ingredient prices (grain, byproducts, vitamins, minerals, amino acids) from weak Canadian dollar and cost of transportation. These costs will be felt by producers shortly in increased cost of feed.
- Crash in the ethanol industry and related oil/ gas sector lead to no dried distillers grains (DDGs) available – they can be substituted with other higher cost ingredients.

Anticipated Impacts

- Need to source standby drivers from other industries if we see COVID impact our driving staff for farm deliveries.
- Incoming rail freight for commodities is a large concern. Reliance on 100% truck freight into the Fraser Valley is not achievable.
- Transportation of incoming feed ingredients & finished feed to farms is heavily reliant on people for this function.
- Work force may be impacted by staff forced to stay home to look after children due to school and child car closures.
- Concern that ingredient shortages might occur from suppliers leading to feed manufacturers being unable to meet feed formulation standards set out by CFIA
- Indication that feed ingredient prices will rise in the near future
- Closure of manufacturing plants for feed ingredients overseas (India) may delay ingredients from entering Canada. Vital ingredients are sourced from China, Malaysia, India that are anticipated to have shortages due to quarantine closures or delays in shipping from containers requiring 14 day quarantine
- Malaysia exports palm fat for dairy rations to optimize butter fat production; the already short supply of butter, the industry must have access to this ingredient
- Low number of containers leaving Chinese ports; slow down of China will likely be felt in the coming months.

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Forage

Prepared by Chris Zabek

Current Impacts

- Currently minimal forage impacts but producer uncertainty about future impacts on prices, costs.
- BCFC research project (currently in process of securing funding) will be delayed due to inability to recruit summer research staff

Anticipated Impacts

- Uncertainty whether field days held by 3rd parties will proceed.
- Impacts to forage will be largely dependant upon impacts to livestock sectors.

Outreach

s.21

Regional Outreach

Hwy 16 North

Regional Agrologist, John Stevenson 250 643 2445 / John.J.Stevenson@gov.bc.ca

Regional Agrologist, Karen Tabe 236 409-2009 / Karen.Tabe@gov.bc.ca

- Supply stores reporting no interruption to supply chain for ag products, but sensitive to ever changing situation

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- Seasonally quiet time in the central interior as many producers engaged with calving

Events Impacted

- Workshops cancelled
- Uncertainty whether spring/summer events such as field days, meetings, AGM, will proceed.
- Routine contact among producers of all types reduced

Current Impacts

- Service providers and customer support staff at ag retail locations are struggling to adapt to social distancing in retail setting and increased shortage of staff. More commerce business done via phone and email.
- Uncertainty in beef sector at auction Bull Sales, lower prices and attendance
- Farmers market (Smithers, Terrace) awaiting direction from BCAFM; mixed optics from consumers some extremely happy that producers and products are available, others strongly opposed to any business /commerce occurring
- Dairy producers utilizing BCDA "Bonus Days" due to strong domestic product consumption

Anticipated Impacts

- Uncertainty regarding road and highway transport of inputs and concern about supply chain for seed, fertilizer, fuel, pesticides.
- Uncertainty around feasibility of future and delivery of current research projects due to disruptions.
- Livestock auction markets (Vanderhoof) currently still active but may be cancelled.

Cariboo-Chilcotin Coast

Katie Galliazzo on Behalf of Nicole Pressey 250-267-2765 / Nicole.Pressey@gov.bc.ca

Events Affected

- Williams Lake Farmers Market hoping to undertake modified Market season starting in May likely with food vendors only and signing up for Local Line platform through BC Farmers Market Association; Seedy Saturday in Williams Lake and 100 Mile cancelled until 2021
- Steve Kenyon – Year Round Grazing Systems and Using Livestock to Build Soil Health postponed indefinitely at Williams Lake TRU Campus on March 17th hosted by the Cariboo Cattlemen's Association
- CHAT Communications Workshop postponed indefinitely at TRU Williams Lake for March 26th in partnership with Cariboo Cattlemen's Association, BC Agriculture Council and Applied Sustainable Ranching
- Canada GAP workshop for Quesnel in partnership with Quesnel Farmers Market for spring 2020 cancelled
- Quesnel Farmers Market working with SD28 to continue holding the market on SD28 grounds, as current SD28 policy is to not allow gatherings

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Current Impacts

- A lot of producers in the Cariboo live in areas that don't have cell service or internet so can't access new online platforms offered by some businesses or solutions offered by associations/government ie. BCAFM Local Line online platform
- Catering and dine-in food services moved to take out or delivery (some only delivery)
- In-person auction moved to online/phone and limited people attending in person unless buying
- Closed or diminished capacity, or decreased customers
- Significantly decreased income
- Loss of information exchange among producers
- AgriTourism affected, asking public not to visit on farm stores
- Increased demand on products, lack of labor to keep up with demand

Anticipated Impacts

- Ranchers will start to think if they can make do with the stock they have on hand, likely won't purchase new cattle and may hold cattle over instead of selling this year
- It may become more and more difficult to get resources, materials and source them
- Significantly decreased income
- Loss of information exchange among producers
- Loss of potential unexpected sales
- Seed and starter sales can be a significant income
- If customer cancels or restricts events, may impact orders for producer, therefore income
- There will likely be closures of guest ranches

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Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

s.21

Central and South Okanagan and Boundary
Christina Forbes - 250 861-7201 / Christina.Forbes@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Staffing shortages in some local processing plants.
- Invoice payments challenging to collect as people are worried about not being paid
- Seeing an increase in demand in the short term for local meat
- Increase in apple packing to meet the demand last two weeks, this has now slowed to a halt now that food chains are saturated.

Anticipated Impacts

- Increase in prices for inputs like packaging products, feed and fertilizer. Questions about the long-term supply of materials (e.g. barrels, wine bottles, feed) as supply chains have the potential for disruption in the future.
- Concerns about labour shortages in the long term for tree fruit and grape industry. Federal protocols for TFW have recently been released but there is still no clarity on the process to get workers on flights into Canada or how many workers will still be able (willing?) to come. Lack of labour will result in serious production and harvest issues.
- Financial impact to producers may impact ability for farmers to purchase feed for livestock
- Long term decline for meat and produce with restaurants closing

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Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

- Concern about impact to Farmer's Markets. Spring markets opening up in May. Looking at alternate options and ways to allow for the safe selling of food in these markets
- Food processors concerned about the shortages of PPE in the future for their workers
- Loss of income from agri-tourism a major concern as the length of self-isolation goes on. May is typically the beginning of the season.
- Individual orchardists that sell direct in their own fruit stands expressing concern about impact into summer. Without tourists, and locals not wanting to leave home they may be unable to sell a majority of their fruit in this model. Beginning to think about other options.
- Reduction in flights may reduce export ability of products.

Outreach

Contacts located in grapes (wine) and tree fruits and food processing

Fraser Valley

Regional Agrologist - Kim Sutherland - 604 556-3073 / Kim.Sutherland@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Producers with high-end or niche product going through grocery stores and that are sold to restaurants seeing markets drying up.
- Producers who supply businesses who in turn supply tourism markets are also seeing markets drying up.
- Animal products are on-line and production lines can't be stopped right away, with fresh inventory can't save and is a total loss.
- Expansion plans are on hold.
- Farmers selling to direct markets are seeing product demand hold steady or increase for now
- Will there be vegetable seed hoarding?
- As mentioned, increased staff costs due to lack of Woofers this year
- Staff shortages due to staff self-isolating at home, affecting larger scale businesses with a lot of staff
- Floriculture sector selling through retail saw revenue drop by 60% 1st week as people stayed home
- Direct niche market supply managed poultry quickly adjusting business model to sell more on line and with customer pick-up at farm gate.
- BC TECH workshop was sold out before producers who are quickly adjusting business model and trying to sell fresh product directly to customers. Having asked for this workshop again as producers who are quickly switching to on-line selling and delivery systems do not have TECH savvy and need help to get technically proficient to carry out this business model.

Anticipated Impacts

- Loss of production lines in specialty items and loss of business income and business diversity
- Immediate and sudden revenue loss in non-supply managed sector
- Could be flood of poor-quality product from elsewhere in world as markets elsewhere (if behave in same manner) dry up. Be hard for local businesses to recover.
- Concern about future shortage of supplies to get products to direct markets.

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- Theme of large expansion projects on hold through several industries.
- If lock-down continues through May could destroy some seasonal businesses such as nurseries as spring is a critical time of year.
- Retailers are not sure they will operate garden centers this spring, have a major impact on suppliers, nursery sector.
- Relocated some TFW to other farms, offsite.
- Concern about farm supply businesses such as mechanical services, tire replacement services, etc. could close, but these are essential to keep farms going and carrying out farm activities in a timely manner.
- Fear among all businesses that if a staff person becomes ill with COVID then they will not be able to keep farm labour so store will close with no revenue, production of fresh produce will be severely impacted, etc.

Economic Impacts in nursery sector

- Investment in growing stock for nurseries has been made already
- April, May are the biggest months for shipping, moving product, 70% of revenue
- Expect reduction in spring shipments to big box stores of 50%--every nursery and greenhouse is in same boat

Economic Impact for Agassiz Goat Dairy

- Are experiencing a great deal of economic disruption as a large part of product going through one processor who has reduced or stopped accepting product (reneged on contract)

Agri-Tourism

- Agri Tourism industry relies heavily on events, school tours and bus tours for a substantial portion of income as people buy products during tours and for advertising their business for future in-person visits. All events are cancelled, beginning with all Easter events. Revenue loss is substantial.

Current Impacts

Summary from three businesses and general impacts for farm businesses that have store fronts that sell directly to their customers:

- Difficult to forecast how season is going to unfold, so businesses are struggling to understand what to order to prepare to run their businesses
- Currently businesses are involved in farming operations, setting up for season
- Concern that critical businesses that supply goods and services for farming operations, (such as the tire company if your tire goes flat on your tractor when seeding), stay open.
- Nursery garden centers are opening now, changing what they are selling and wondering if people will pull back?
- Struggle with staff not coming in, or taxing staff in the store as some are in high risk group and are not able to do direct sales.
- How to pay for staff who are working now, but paid for in future sales, as business gets very busy later in spring and in summer
- Cancel printed guide for Fraser Valley Direct Farm Marketing Association –have printed the guide since 1995—25 years.

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- Farm Stores need to access paper towels “Recently in trying to order on-line from ULINE for paper towels to fill our dispensers in the store, we were advised they could not sell paper towels to anyone who had not purchased in 2019”. Finding hand sanitizer anywhere has been a challenge.
- Some farms who have developed business models for selling directly to the public from their farm are quickly changing to an on-line model. The online learning curve is high and technical assistance would be appreciated in a timely manner. As fresh product becomes available it is imperative that it moves quickly through the channels.

Anticipated Impacts

- All selling farm products directly to the customer and do not know what to plant for seasonal u-pick, ie should we plant pumpkin patch?, corn for sweet corn, corn maize?
- Currently high-end products slowing down in sales, anticipate that more of product from these farms will be impacted as they are typically high quality and high end products.
- Have limited storage capacity for products that keep (ie wine) if store sales slow down.
- Reduction of labour force as people stay home
- How to offer product for sale in store—shift to pre-packaged product? Guidance required.
- Will it be possible to do u-pick (a large portion of several businesses), order u-pick bags and supplies?

Economic Impacts

- If visits curtailed due to social distancing expect lose 70% of income
- Small revenue losses on smaller operations have a large impact
- Tour/event losses for Campbells gold in the spring only (April, May) are estimated at >\$12,000 of lost revenue, and additional losses will only be quantifiable at the close of season when can compare to previous year. Have events throughout the season. Smallest of all these operations.

Quote

“in real estate the three most important things are ‘location, location, location.’ In farming the three most important things are ‘timing, timing, timing.’ “

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Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

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Kootenay

Kevin Murphy - 250 428-3201 / Kevin.J.Murphy@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Ranchers in the middle of calving season with young families at home due to school closures negatively impacted. Are child care supports available to ranchers and families adding care of children not in school to their workloads?
- Several Kootenay region market gardeners that produce early season greens, but lost restaurant sales have been able to sell a significant portion of their output directly to individual consumers
- WDFI abattoir still operating, not impacted to date
- Many Creston valley orchardists rely on Seasonal Agricultural Workers and have not been able to secure them for spring work.
- WDFI feed store experiencing same fate as grocery stores with some buyers purchasing much larger volumes than normal
- Field harvesting of asparagus may be jeopardized due to limited workforce and distancing requirements during harvest and fresh pack assembly
- Creston valley organic dairy bottles their own milk in glass bottles and distributes milk using their own fleet of refrigerated trucks to grocery chains throughout Kootenay region. Current ban on receiving returned bottles at grocery stores means the dairy is close to running out of glass bottles in which to package their milk

Anticipated Impacts

- Creston asparagus grower has received a confirmation from both Australian/New Zealand and French-Canadian workers that they'll be coming to pick and pack asparagus at the end of April. Grower is implementing measures to protect and school workers on necessary COVID-19 measures. Grower is seeking access to supply of personal protection equipment to ensure workers are safe – since farming is an essential service is protective equipment available through a priority supplier?
- Kootenay region floriculture operation ramping up sales direct to consumer and through existing grocery store clients considering sales restricted through local farmer's markets

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- Creston valley fruit stands that rely on skilled foreign workers to perform all field operations for market garden sites serving their fruit stands anticipate a significant reduction in volume and variety of fresh produce this season unless these returning workers are able to work here this season
- Several Kootenay region farmer's markets are uncertain about opening this spring with only food selling vendors as cost of site rental unaffordable without fees from non-essential market vendors
- Vegetable seed companies have recorded large increase in seed sales to backyard gardeners which may impact demand for market gardener produce at farmer's markets
- Market gardener's with existing Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) clients looking to expand volume of product marketed through CSA in anticipation of lower volume sales at farmer's markets (virtual or real)
- Major BC asparagus producer (sells wholesale and retail) normally starts harvesting on 20th of April with significant workforce housed on farm and working in the field and in packing house potentially unable to secure necessary workforce or harvest and sell normal volume of fresh asparagus.
- Kootenay region floriculture farmers concerned they will lose their ability to market fresh flowers sold through direct sales, farmers markets, grocery stores and subscription services unless floriculture is also deemed an essential agriculture service
- Creston Farmer's Market (CFM) spring opening of outdoor market might be delayed or cancelled if recommended by Provincial authorities
- Concerned that marketing options for 2020 farm products will be negatively impacted
- Concern that wood chips for livestock bedding could be limited if mills close
- WDFI Agri-Park Farmer's Market may need to cancel if recommended by Provincial authorities
- Without SAWP workers 2020 Creston valley cherry harvest in jeopardy
- CFM anticipates significant interest in online market sales if Farmer's Markets opening restricted
- CFM looking for alternate site if Town of Creston refuses access to operate on municipal property
- Majority of Creston valley cherries exported overseas and freight rates for shipping by air anticipated to increase sharply and negatively impact returns to growers
- Ban on returning glass bottles in which to bottle milk may force dairy producer/processor to incur additional cost to add capacity to package milk in plastic containers (At consumer end this is an estimated 30 cents per bottle price increase)
- In the near-term limited bottle supply will reduce volume of milk available for shipping and reduced freight volume increases per liter freight cost for milk

Outreach

The above information was collected in collaboration with the contacts below.

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Metro-Vancouver

Nadia Mori - 778-201-5431 / nadia.mori@gov.bc.ca

Highlight of new concerns arising:

- Issues around securing Foreign and Domestic labour force
- Urgently need official communication to local workforce that they are encouraged to work

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- Urgently need official communication from health officials on best practices for close working conditions (abattoir, greenhouse, packaging plants)
- Trucking access is now at a premium and being hogged by big players (Costco and other grocers)
- In-fighting among the agricultural community over limited supplies and who should get them
- Growers frustrated with repeated surveying from Fed Gov, Prov Gov, LG, and associations (pressing for a streamlined approach with one point of contact)

Current Impacts

- Financial strains – unsure how to pay labour force and keep cash flow operational
- Additional expenses to accommodate COVID-19 protocols (porta-potty rentals, extra wash stations, extra staffing shifts, setting up online sales streams)
- Labour still very hard to come by
- Supply chain concerns: access to inputs and packaging materials, poultry bedding shortage
- Uncertainty on how much to seed right now
- Three potato washing and grading facilities may need to close because of domestic labour shortage
- Domestic labour shortage – staff afraid to go to work; collecting relief funding instead.
- Lack of high-level communication that it is necessary and safe for domestic agricultural workers to keep working
- Gauging (5-20% price increase) in trucking industry prevents growers' access to trucking capacity – trucks make more money driving empty for large corporations than incorporating a pickup for local grower on their trucking route
- Growers receiving multiple surveys from Fed, Prov, LG, and Associations – growers feel frustrated and overburdened

Anticipated Impacts

- Need to protect food supply chain with improved regulations to be better prepared for future pandemics.
- Agri-tourism expected to suffer financially (\$40,000-100,000 mentioned by some producers)
- Anticipating more offerings of CSA model
- Anticipated need to change food delivery model for CSA producers; which would require additional investments in fuel (for delivery), labour and supplies (reusable boxes etc.)
- In-fighting among the agricultural community over access to limited resources (access to labour, trucking and markets)

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North Okanagan

Chris Zabek - 250 861-7680 / Chris.Zabek@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Cherry producers are spending money on necessary season preparation i.e. pruning, fertilizing while still uncertain sufficient seasonal workers will be available to harvest. If there is no labour certainty, producers need to quit spending money now.

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- Financial lenders are nervous and requesting daily updates from cherry producers on the labour situation.
- Some north Okanagan mixed producers are purchasing inputs in bulk now.
- Growers, input suppliers and service providers have been practicing social distancing as much as possible. More business done via phone and email.
- Calving, planning for field season, field work proceeding mostly as per usual but with greater focus on personal biosecurity.
- Salmon Arm organic farmers market has gone online via Localline.ca
- Orders from restaurants have declined; orders from grocers have increased for producers able to satisfy the requirements

Anticipated Impacts

- Additional significant costs will be incurred by cherry producers ongoing i.e. spraying, pollination.
- Construction of additional cherry packing facilities now may be a huge financial loss if labour is not sufficient to harvest cherries.
- Delivery service potentially offered by local food stores.
- Uncertainty of impacts on inputs such as supplies of seed, fertilizer, pesticides.
- Parts, supplies made in China so far in good availability but border closures would impact this.
- Feed and livestock vitamins access currently good but any disruptions to rail, feed mills etc would quickly create an issue.
- Concern that local workforce will stay home even though agriculture is essential service
- Sourcing PPE for poultry production/processing is difficult

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Peace Region

Lori Vickers - 250 787-3241 / Lori.Vickers@gov.bc.ca

Aaron Mackay - 250 787-3214 / Aaron.Mackay@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Peace region agriculture producers are already facing challenges from a poor summer forage crop and grain crop; this further exacerbates their challenges. BC Field crop producers are still dealing with challenges from the 2019 harvest and many crops left out in the fields. There is concern about ability to get on fields in the spring to harvest, prepare fields and then seed a new crop. In particular, they are concerned about how road bans this spring will impact the spring field season.
- Challenging to educate farm help over the seriousness of the ongoing issue and concerns about lack of preventative measures being taken in the region
- Rural networks congestion (internet, cell) being taxed from increased usage causing outages
- Market uncertainty due to volatile livestock prices; producers unsure of how to adjust plans. Holding off on equipment/supply spends where possible
- Sudden high demand to local direct marketers is taking all supply from this sector. Most of these producers only finish and slaughter animals a few times a year so there will not be any additional supply to fill this demand.

Anticipated Impacts

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Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

- Lots of uncertainty around future livestock and grain prices
- Lack of uptake of many Business Risk Management Programs currently due to high administrative burden
- Potential for impacts sourcing crop inputs due to supply chain disruptions (i.e. fertilizers, seed)
- Loss of labour pool (international labour, WWOFF program). Daycares closing provides challenges to small scale producers
- Local greenhouses unsure of ability to operate this summer
- Local farmers markets expecting decreased operating season
- Some animal stock/seeds shipped on commercial flights from other countries. Concern over the availability of these products
- Community gardens seeking clarity on how to operate

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Sea to Sky

Sunshine Coast Regional District, qathet Regional District, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Angela Boss - 778 666-0529 / Angela.Boss@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Small and medium sized producers reliant on direct sales to restaurants have lost many of these sales.
- Some farms have seen a very high demand in recent weeks and are finding the point of sale to be the main bottle neck. They are now looking at new strategies to get their products directly to consumers (i.e. online orders and delivery)
- Mixed vegetable producers are very busy with seedlings.
- Chicken feed supplies (for small flocks) purchased at feed supply stores running out quickly.
- Additional capital needed for moving from a Farmers' Market model to other direct sales models.
- Farmers' market staff are actively working with AGRI to set-up an online platform that will provide farmers with an alternative tool for getting their products out to the public (lots of appreciation for the funding provide by AGRI to support this BCFMA initiative)
- Many farmers looking for information on good agriculture practices related to on-farm food safety – FAQ sheet, or other forms of information (webinar) on how to package goods and keep customers and staff safe. There is a lot of information circling about but farmers want a single source of information from the Ministry.

Anticipated Impacts

- CSA operations are looking at moving towards home delivery rather than customers picking up. Capital required to do this.

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- If restaurant markets continue to decline producers will lose significant sales that many small and medium sized farms in remote communities rely upon.
- Fear of the impact of farmers' markets closing and the impact on small farmers.
- Few alternate marketing options in some locations due to food safety certification requirements by buyers (ex. CanadaGAP required by Overwaitea buyers).
- Decrease in abattoir capacity could become critical for farmers with no other alternatives.
- Agri-tourism and special events being cancelled will result in large revenue losses and the potential loss of farm tax status for some.

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Vancouver Island North

Nanaimo, Comox Valley, Alberni-Clayoquot, Strathcona and Mt Waddington Regional Districts, Northern Gulf Islands

Jill Hatfield - 250 334-7272 / Jill.Hatfield@gov.bc.ca

Issue: COVID19 – Agriculture Sector Impact

Summary as of 3:30pm, Tuesday March 31

Contact: Georgina Hodson, Director, Industry Development, Ministry of Agriculture 250-896-6221 / Georgina.Hodson@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Monthly meetings cancelled until further notice
- April 4th equipment auction cancelled
- Back yard cannabis growing workshop cancelled
- Monthly meetings cancelled
- Scheduled AGM cancelled
- Moving to their outside location Saturday, 3 weeks early
- Were to be outside but the Town of Qualicum Beach has asked them not to open this Saturday
- Postponed their March 29th AGM
- Closed but looking at an on-line marketing option
- Comox Valley Farmers Market only one open on the North island, restricted to food producers only, not sure for how long as there is some social media push-back
- Supply chains for fertilizer, seeds and sanitary supplies such as gloves, wipes and hand sanitizer are delayed or hard to get
- Many smaller producers rely on WestCoast Seeds, their website says to expect 30 day shipping delays
- Moving to on-line sales and delivery is proving to be challenging for many small to medium farmers that are not set up physically or financially
- Top-Shelf Feed supply store in Black Creek closed due to staff shortages due to covid-19, Courtenay store open for on-line ordering and pick-up
- Spring fertilizer supplies for forage crops experiencing delays as it is coming from the mainland
- Many smaller farm stands opening for order pickup; Comox Valley Economic Development has an on-line searchable list of those open <https://discovercomoxvalley.com/discover/explore/supporting-comox-valley-businesses/>
- North Island College Farm School located at Comox Bay Farm rescheduling on-site instruction for June
- Media concern raised about provincial slaughter regulations limiting local red meat products from the Alberni Valley. Wanting D & E licences to be available to producers
- A few new CSA's starting up and soliciting customers
- Big push to get people planting their own garden. Some farmers have expressed concern about how this may impact produce sales in the peak season

Anticipated Impacts

- Equipment auction is a highly anticipated regional event and fund raiser for the CVFI
- The AGM scheduled for March 24th has been postponed indefinitely.
- The 2020 auction has been cancelled
- (By far the biggest concern related to me has been the issue of farmers markets. Market season starts to ramp up mid-April with the seasonal markets opening early May. This is creating urgency to find a way for farmers to sell their crops as they become available)
- Some farm stands opening early and offering to sell additional products from neighbouring farms, worried about ALCA rules
- Concerns about keeping a physical distance between field staff, customers, when farm markets get underway in about a month
- Alternative marketing, delivery or direct sales, will not be able to move the volume of produce that will be coming on-line by May
- Distilleries increasing producing sanitizer for use by medical practitioners and the public; Arbutus Distillery-Nanaimo, Wayward Distillery-Courtenay and Shelter Point Distillery-Oyster River

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- Many organizations offering to help accelerate the move to on-line ordering for farmers markets, concern about overwhelming the industry with a variety of platforms
- Increasing field labour needs require putting protocols in place that keep everyone safe
- On-Line Markets - Island Roots Nanaimo will be live Wednesday at midnight for pick-up Sunday
- Qualicum Beach Farmers Market is planning to be open this Saturday as is the Comox Valley Farmers Market
- The BC Local line on-line ordering system is being adopted by Qualicum Beach, Comox Valley and Cedar Farmers Market
- CSA's are advertising in the local area for the upcoming season. A few new farms are considering this model in the short-term
- Inventory management issues are a concern for processed products as some distribution channels are not operational and processors are over supplied. Worry about being cut back later in the year
- Sawmills are not allowing farmers to pick-up sawdust or shavings on site. Would like to find some way to source this product for livestock producers
- Some supply chains are delayed or not working; fertilizer and seeds plus ag products coming from the US. Farmers are substituting with local sourced products
- Looking for some very practical health and safety protocols for managing field staff for upcoming season. Worksafe BC information is at too high a level

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Vancouver Island South

Doug Pepper - 250 746-1212 / Doug.Pepper@gov.bc.ca

Current Impacts

- Shortage of sawdust bedding on Vancouver Island – essential for calving
- Closure of Cowichan Tribes band office causing delays in land leasing procedure
- Incentive days added to increase milk production
- Increased feed cost to keeping livestock longer than anticipated due to livestock market difficulties
- Migrant workers not available for start of growing season.
- Uncertainty around markets is making it difficult/impossible to plan for the season ahead. Staffing decisions are difficult to make with so many unknowns.
- Current staff are being laid off and livestock reduced to mitigate probable loss of sales.
- Livestock hauling and abattoir facilities are closed or greatly reduced in some areas.
- Unable to keep up with demand for some products (eggs, beef) during this panic buying phase.
- Difficult keeping current staff 'isolated' during work.
- Changes to supply chain, and deliveries/shipments taking longer than normal.

Anticipated Impacts

- Increased cost and demand of imported forage
- Continued closure of meat processors putting pressure on existing operations.
- Grain sales may decline with decreased restaurant and bar sales.
- Inability to farm land due to Cowichan Tribes continued closure of band office
- Demand for product increasing, not enough workers to fulfill demand.
- Farmers market shut-downs will have a major impact on smaller producers' ability to sell product

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- Significant to severe loss of sales due to restaurant closures, farmer's market closures or reduced attendance due to social distancing messaging, and loss of on farm event revenue.
- Farmer's who sell largely direct to consumer through the farmer's markets are worried that having wholesale more product will decrease profitability significantly.
- Travel restrictions may make it difficult for farm labor to travel from their current locations to work on farms in the Cowichan.
- Concern about loss of labour to increase spread of virus
- Expected increases in the costs of many inputs. Suppliers are already announcing surcharges to deal with the volatile pricing they are experiencing.
- Concerned about long-term ability to receive basic items such as hand sanitizer, masks, and gloves for staff. Farm workers use these items on a regular basis.

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