

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

Ref: 196046

Date: November 23, 2021

Title: B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) Farm Compliance Inspections

Issue: The B.C. Breeder and Feeder Association (BCBFA) has concerns with the BC SPCA's intention to conduct unannounced inspections of commercial farms.

Background:

In a letter to the Ministry dated June 23, 2021, the BC SPCA advised it was planning to complete unannounced compliance inspections of commercial turkey, pork, eggs, chicken, and beef farms. The BC SPCA indicated that they would advise each commodity board of its intention to conduct the unannounced compliance inspections through a personalized letter.

Previously, the BC SPCA only inspected a farm after receiving an animal welfare complaint about that farm.

Section 15.1 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (PCAA) allows an authorized agent of the BC SPCA to enter any premises or vehicle where an operator is engaging in a regulated activity for the purpose of determining whether the PCAA and its regulations are being complied with. This can occur without a warrant if it is during normal business hours and the premises to be inspected is not a dwelling house.

BC SPCA inspections are carried out by authorized agents, who are BC SPCA employees who have been appointed as special provincial constables under the *Police Act*.

Of the six commodity groups chosen by the BC SPCA, it planned to inspect two farms per commodity group for a total of twelve inspections by year end. The BC SPCA indicated that as of October 7, 2021 they had completed four of the unannounced compliance inspections and were looking to complete the remaining eight by the end of 2021.

The BC SPCA shared that in early November, their team attempted to conduct inspections and were denied entry at two farms. s.13

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Inspections were put on hold during the wildfires at the end of the summer and early fall. The BC SPCA has noted that while the provincial state of emergency announced on November 17, 2021 due to flooding and mud slides is in place, it would not conduct any unannounced

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compliance inspections. BC SPCA will review the process for unannounced inspections once the state of emergency is lifted.

The BC SPCA will provide details of the inspections conducted in a final report to the Ministry. A completion date for the final report is not available given the state of emergency and associated uncertainty of scheduling the remaining inspections.

On September 7, 2021, the BCBFA had written to the Ministry expressing concern with the BC SPCA's intention to conduct unannounced inspections of commercial farms. While the BCBFA understands that the BC SPCA has the legislative authority to carry out the unannounced compliance inspections, they have concerns about the process which may include concerns about biosecurity and privacy, level of farming knowledge and lack of communication.

BCBFA has requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss further. The BCBFA has also suggested that the BC SPCA hold meetings with each commodity representative to discuss.

Discussion:

Given that the BC SPCA has the legislative authority to undertake unannounced compliance inspections, operators are required to allow BC SPCA inspectors to access their farms during business hours. The purpose of these inspections is for the BC SPCA to assess whether any animals may be in distress. During the inspection, the BC SPCA inspectors are restricted to the following activities listed in PCAA s. 15.2:

- Being accompanied by an expert (e.g., a veterinarian);
- Requiring a person to produce relevant records or things in the person's possession or control;
- Inspecting, copying or removing relevant records or things;
- Requiring a person to demonstrate a skill, operate a thing or carry out a procedure;
- Making records in respect of a person, place or thing; and
- Taking samples and performing analyses and tests.

The BC SPCA has noted that a veterinarian with experience in the species or commodity being inspected will be present at each inspection. Given this is the first time that the BC SPCA is exercising its inspection authority, a ministry staff person is attending each inspection as a neutral observer.

Despite the broad authority under the PCAA, inspectors will only enter a property with consent of the owner or operator. While the inspections will not be pre-announced, inspectors will be flexible and work with the operator to minimize disruption of regular farming activities.

The BC SPCA may take steps to relieve distress in an animal discovered during an inspection.

The importance of biosecurity protection on farms is recognized. Inspectors, ministry staff and veterinarians attending these inspections will observe all necessary biosecurity protocols for each farm, including showering in and out of the operation, and bringing and utilizing all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). All of the safety protocols related to COVID-19 will also be followed.

In relation to privacy, all parties understand the need to respect a farmer's privacy, and the BC SPCA will not publish the name or any identifying information of any farmer or farm operation. Certain aggregate data may be reported, for example the percentage of farms that denied access to inspectors, but without naming or identifying them. All information gathered during an inspection will stay between the inspector and the operator.

In addition, commodity boards are not required to provide membership information such as names and locations to the BC SPCA. The BC SPCA can only demand records in the course of inspecting the premises of a regulated activity.

The BC SPCA has taken steps to facilitate effective communication by meeting with the commodity boards (August 4 and September 22) to provide an overview of the unannounced commercial farm inspections and respond to questions. The BC SPCA has also provided to British Columbia Agriculture Council (BCAC) an overview of the inspection process and sample checklists by commodity group (see attached). The BC SPCA has also been engaging with the Ministry to discuss upcoming unannounced commercial farm inspections.

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Suggested Response:

- I know there has been apprehension among some farmers regarding this new initiative.
- These inspections are not to target farmers but are an opportunity to work together to promote and enhance animal welfare.
- Protecting animal care and welfare is a shared goal, and the BC SPCA and farmers both have important roles to play to achieve that goal.
- Ensuring that animals are not in distress is a priority for the Ministry, the BC SPCA and farmers.

- The BC SPCA will only enter a property with consent of the owner and work with the farmer to minimize any disruption of farming activities.
- A veterinarian with experience in the species or commodity being inspected will accompany the BC SPCA. A ministry staff person has attended the four completed inspections and will attend any future inspections as a neutral observer.
- The BC SPCA has been meeting with commodity boards to provide an overview of the unannounced commercial farm inspections and respond to questions.

Contact: Sandra Cavallin, Senior Policy Analyst, 778 698-9869

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Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION

Ref: 196156

Date: October 12, 2021

Title: Provincial Coastal Marine and Wild Salmon Strategies Discussion.

Issue: A strategic discussion between Minister Popham, Minister of State Cullen, and Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly to discuss the approach, timing, alignment, and possible next steps for the development of a Coastal Marine Strategy and a Wild Salmon Strategy.

Background:

Wild Salmon Strategy

In 2018 the Premier announced the formation of the Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC). The Council prepared an Options Paper which underwent broad public consultation and resulted in specific recommendations and action items to inform a provincial salmon strategy. This resulted in various provincial actions (please see Appendix A) including the current mandates given to Minister Popham and the Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture to “Lead work with the federal government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.’s wild salmon populations, including by working to double the size of the Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund” (BCSRIF).

Staff at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) developed scoping options to present to Cabinet for continued work on a salmon strategy. Through the summer, work with key partners (First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF)) developed several scoping options for B.C.’s salmon strategy. The input provided helped focus the strategy on an action-oriented approach, which reflects the significant work and recommendations made by others, including WSAC, in discussing how to recover wild salmon.

Coastal Marine Strategy

Minister of State Cullen was given a mandate to: “lead work to develop a new provincial coastal marine strategy – in partnership with First Nations and federal and local governments – to better protect coastal habitat while growing coastal economies”, with support from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Staff received Cabinet approval to develop a comprehensive strategy focused on provincial areas of jurisdiction and strategic federal issues (e.g., salmon, species at risk, anchorages). The initiative is in the very early stages of development, with staff seeking approval to engage First Nations to identify priority themes/topics.

First Nations Considerations: First Nations make up a significant proportion of B.C.’s commercial fishers, as well as have economic interests in tidal sportfishing and aquaculture. Additionally, most B.C. First Nation communities have strong cultural and social ties to salmon, including a Constitutional right to harvest fish. First Nations and Indigenous

organizations are partners with B.C. on various marine and fisheries related matters such as Marine Protected Area Network planning (Coastal First Nations) and the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with First Nations Fisheries Council and 3 provincial ministries (FLNRORD, MIRR & AFF) that formalizes a collaborative working relationship and coordinates approaches to support First Nations involvement in the development and implementation of policy and management of fish, fisheries, water and habitat.

Discussion: The strategies are in different stages of development and have different levels of scope as outlined in the table below:

	Timing & Engagement	Current focus	Resources Required	Alignment
Wild Salmon	<p>s.12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direction to begin external engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions: Building on action and implementation of Wild Salmon Advisory Council and other recommendations. • What needs to be done is known; what remains unknown is how activities will be prioritized, partnered, and resourced. 	s.12; s.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Salmon would form a sub element of any coastal strategy and also have important links to interior BC, fresh water, climate, old growth, reconciliation, and biodiversity actions.
Coastal Marine	s.12; s.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early engagement with FN leadership to identify priorities under 4 broad themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance/ Information 2. Economic 3. Social/ Cultural 4. Ecological • What needs to be done is not yet known; significant external / internal engagement needed. 	s.12; s.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not species or habitat specific – expected to address multiple coast-wide stressors that may have links to salmon (e.g., climate change) • Actions will be strategic in nature; more specific, operational actions will need to consider differences

	organizations/ forums.			between regions of the coast.
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Internally, staff at MAFF and FLNRORD continue to meet regularly to ensure the direction of work is aligned, and to identify opportunities for more efficient external consultation and engagement.^{s.13; s.17}

s.13; s.17

DFO has indicated they are beginning an extensive public engagement process on the federal Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative in early November. DFO has expressed hope B.C. will have clarity over its commitment for funding the BCSRIF, which is embedded in BC's wild salmon strategy.^{s.13; s.17}

s.13; s.17

Next Steps:

Scoping this work will be important to determine next steps. Key strategic questions include:

1. What is the best way to align these two strategies while recognizing that they are at different development stages ^{s.13; s.17} and different scopes e.g., freshwater, and marine?
s.13; s.17
2. ^{s.16; s.17}
3. What would be optimal timing in terms of leveraging federal funds (Federal government has interest in further developing the Blue Economy, Coastal Restoration Fund and has announced a \$647Million investment in Wild Salmon, including \$100M starting this fiscal year for BCSRIF)?
4. How or do the other strategies e.g., Watershed Security, Climate, Old Growth, etc. need to align with the Wild Salmon and/or Coastal Marine strategies? What communications plan needs to be prepared to align / rollout these initiatives?

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Charlie Short, Executive Director, FLNR, 778-974-5841

APPENDIX A – Wild Salmon Strategy Timeline

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Appendix A: Wild Salmon Strategy Timeline

- 2018 Wild Salmon Strategy Initiative launched by the Province with the goal to develop a made-in-BC wild salmon strategy that supports restoring healthy and abundant wild salmon stocks in BC.
 - June 2018, 14 members were appointed to the Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC) by Premier John Horgan to provide key insights and guidance during strategy development process.
 - September 2018 WSAC prepared the “Options for a Made-In-BC Wild Salmon Strategy” which details 3 Goals and over 12 Strategies to work to achieving them. This paper was used as the basis for the engagement process which led to WSAC’s final report.
 - December 2018 and January 2019, community meetings were hosted by WSAC members in seven locations: Campbell River, Port Alberni, Skidegate, Prince Rupert, Richmond, Kamloops, and Langford. The meetings were town-hall style and involved a short presentation by the WSAC hosts on the strategy development process and Options Paper, followed by attendees providing their feedback to the WSAC hosts and audience. Concurrent to the community meetings was an online engagement process, which provided the opportunity for input to be submitted through an online feedback form or by email. These engagement opportunities were communicated in several ways, including on the initiative’s engagement webpage, through print and digital advertising, and through direct invitations. During the engagement period, there were 4,842 site visits to the engagement webpage, which included information on the wild salmon strategy development process, the Options Paper (and a two-page summary document), the community meeting schedule and access to the online feedback form. Print advertisements in local newspapers and digital advertisements on Facebook provided details on upcoming meetings, as well as information on the online engagement. Direct invitations to community meetings were sent to MLA offices, Mayors and Councilors, First Nations governments, and local stakeholder groups in advance of each meeting.
 - February 2019, release of B.C. Wild Salmon Advisory Council Recommendations for a Made-in-B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy which provides recommendations for the province.
 - May 2019 B.C. establishes Wild Salmon Day. And provides \$5M in funding to PSF.
 - July 2019 BCSRIF launched.
 - July 2020, release of Wild Salmon in British Columbia: An Update on Provincial Actions which concludes “ The WSAC provided key recommendations for stewarding wild salmon, increasing their health and abundance, and protecting community values related to these iconic species

for future generations. The Province is working with the federal government, First Nations, communities, and stakeholders on immediate actions toward reaching these goals, as well as planning how our shared work on **made-in-B.C. solutions will continue into the future**. The complex task of restoring wild salmon and their habitats and optimizing their values to British Columbians simply cannot be achieved without a provincewide effort.”

- November 2020, Minister Popham and a new Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Fin Donnelly are given the mandate to “Lead work with the federal government to **develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.’s wild salmon populations**, including by working to double the size of the Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, building on past successes, and supporting innovation in fish hatcheries, and ensuring B.C. processing of B.C.-caught fish”.
- November-Present 2020 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries continue the work of developing made-in-B.C. solutions and specifically strategies/actions that will protect and revitalize B.C.’s wild salmon populations.

Food Hub Status Update
October 21 2021

Food Hub	Location	Number of Tenants	Status	Current Risks/Status	Actions
Cowichan Valley Food Hub	North Cowichan	N/A		s.16	
Kootenay Boundary Food Hub	Greenwood / Rock Creek	3			

Fraser Valley Artisans Food Hub	Abbotsford	10	
Central Kootenay Food Hub	Creston	TBC	

Kamloops Food Hub	Kamloops	7	
Centre for Seafood Innovation	Bowser	15	
Capital Region Food Hub	Victoria	4	

Zest Commercial Food Hub	Salmon Arm	TBC		s.16
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Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR MEETING

Ref: 196226

Date: October 25, 2021

Title: Meeting with Minister Anne Kang, Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST).

Issue: Follow up from May 2021 meeting to discuss veterinary shortages, Complementary Alternative Modalities (CAMs), farrier training, meat processing training, and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs).

Background:

Veterinary shortages

- The College of Veterinarians of B.C. (CVBC) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association- Society of British Columbia Veterinarians (CVMA-SBCV) have emphasized ongoing shortage of veterinarians in B.C. for several years. Veterinary shortages are widespread across Canada.
- Currently B.C. is receiving more graduates from the Western College of Veterinarian Medicine (WCVN) than what is being paid for (due to factors such as the province being a desirable place to live/work). While B.C. is benefitting from this influx, there is no assurance that this approach will continue to shore up B.C.'s veterinary shortage.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) is responsible for the regulation of veterinary medicine in the province, including vet technicians, and for the agricultural sector. AEST supports by facilitating the provision of related post-secondary education, including funding for the WCVN.
- AEST developed a "Future Workforce Readiness Framework" to guide investments in post-secondary education and training to ensure people can adapt and respond to the needs of a cleaner, more sustainable economy. AEST is invited to Treasury Board (TB) as part of Budget 2022 and is including a funding request for the 20 additional seats at WCVN (in partnership with AFF).
- AFF is developing and will seek Cabinet endorsement for an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy which will include the support of complimentary initiatives underway (Attachment 1) to address the veterinarian shortage and support employment in rural areas/production livestock.

CAMs

- The CVBC and the CVMA-SBCV are of the view that both the *Veterinarians Act* and the decision by numerous courts see that only veterinarians registered with CVBC are entitled and qualified to practice veterinary medicine. AFF agrees that this position reflects the current legislative framework.
- CVBC participation, expertise and buy-in would be required by government in exploring policy options regarding the practice of CAMs without veterinary supervision.

- The CVBC and the CVMA-SBCV have concerns about the efficacy and safety of CAMs treatments on animals by non-veterinarians.

Farrier training

- B.C.'s only farrier training program is administered by Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The program was suspended briefly during the pandemic but has resumed for the 2021/22 academic year.
- Support for distance education programs or on-site training programs in the north (University of Northern B.C.) has been requested by the Horse Council of B.C.

Meat processing training

- The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) met virtually with the Minister at the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) meetings in September 2021.
- RDBN expressed the importance of having enough trained, locally available meat cutters and were interested in learning more about skills training supports available through the province.

ESL courses for TFWs

- AFF is currently working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MUNI) to identify several agriculture positions as priority occupations to be included in the next Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) intake (scheduled for winter 2022). Occupations range from labour positions to more specialized positions, such as vets and vet techs.
- The PNP admissions criteria is point-based, and language competency is a major determinant of whether a candidate is successful. Providing ESL courses to TFWs will increase their chances of success to achieve permanent residency.
- Grape and cherry growers have requested support for ESL on-line courses for TFWs.

First Nations Considerations:

Veterinary shortages

- With an additional 20 B.C. Inter-Provincial Agreement (IPA) seats, WCVN is willing to consult with SBCV (which sits on the admissions committee), to ensure some regional considerations (remote, rural, Northern, Indigenous) are part of the application process to secure more veterinarians in these areas. The SBCV knows from past applicants that many applicants return to their home communities to practice veterinary medicine.
- WCVN is also willing to consult with the SBCV to ensure a minimum B.C.-only educational equity admissions process. This would mean B.C. could see qualified successful Indigenous applicants as a certainty at WCVN.

Discussion:

Veterinary shortages

- AFF and AEST both acknowledge that funding an additional 20 seats (if approved) is only one component of addressing the existing veterinary shortage. The funding request for an increased intake of 20 students annually is broken down as follows:

- \$2.14M in on-going provincial funding in 2022/23;
- \$4.31M in 2023/24; \$6.53M in 2024/25; and,
- \$8.80M in 2025/26 (final year is beyond the 3-year fiscal plan).

The first cohort of 40 seats would begin in September 2022 with the first full cohort of 40 veterinarians graduating in 2026.

- AFF's proposed Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy includes complimentary approaches related to childcare (approximately 68% of veterinarians in B.C. are women – Sector Labour Market Partnership (SLMP) report), transportation, and bursaries/incentives.
- CVBC & CVMA/SBCV are currently engaged in developing the additional strategies (development of veterinary technician bylaws, etc.) that were recommended by the SLMP report (Attachment 1).
- Veterinarians and veterinary technicians have been included as priority occupations for PNP intake (winter 2022) to increase immigration of trained veterinarians to B.C.

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Meat processing training

- Determine existing skills training supports for meat cutters through AEST (or the potential to leverage other programs/funding streams to address this labour deficit).

ESL courses for TFWs

- Determine existing ESL courses through AEST that could be extended to TFWs.

Suggested response:

- Additional seats are only part of the overall strategy to reduce veterinary shortages. CVBC and CVMA/SBCV are exploring other recommended options in the Sector Labour Market Partnership report and AFF is exploring ways to support those options, in cooperation with AEST, as part of the development of an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy.
- There is the potential for AFF to continue work with stakeholders (i.e., AEST, CVBC, CVMA/SBCV etc.) to ensure veterinary needs in agriculture are met, long-term.
- AFF will continue to work with AEST around training needs for farriers, meat processing, and any other specialized industry requests.
- AFF will explore any opportunities for ESL courses for TFWs in partnership with AEST.

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Dennis Jess, Labour Program Developer, 778-974-3832
Shannon Tucker, Labour Project Lead, 778-945-1364

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Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Summary of CVBC and CVMA/SBCV Input and Strategies Underway

Attachment 1 – Summary of CVBC and CVMA/SBCV Input and Strategies Underway

- WCVM remains willing to contract with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education to add an additional 20 BC IPA seats to BC's existing 20. That would mean 40 new BC IPA students would be admitted each year.
- With an additional 20 BC IPA seats, WCVM is willing to consult with the Society of BC Veterinarians (SBCV) which sits on the admissions committee, to ensure some regional considerations (remote, rural, Northern, Indigenous,) as well as an emphasis on large animal agriculture veterinarians are part of the application process in an effort to secure more veterinarians in these areas. What the SBCV knows from past applicants is that many applicants return to their home communities to practice veterinary medicine.
- With an additional 20 BC IPA seats, WCVM is willing to consult with the SBCV to ensure a minimum BC-only educational equity admissions process. This would mean BC could see qualified successful Indigenous applicants as a certainty at WCVM.
- CVBC has implemented the following:
 - **Provisional Supervised Active Registration** - In September 2021, CVBC Registrants approved a bylaw amendment which provided a pathway to registration for internationally trained veterinarians who graduated from a veterinary school not accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association and were working towards obtaining their Certificate of Qualification (CQ) to practice in Canada. The Provisional Supervised Active (PSA) class of registration is available to veterinarians who do not yet have a Certificate of Qualification but have already completed the Basic and Clinical Sciences Examination and North American Veterinary Licensing exams. PSA registration enables these veterinarians to work as veterinarians under supervision of a CVBC veterinarian while they prepare for and complete the Pre-Surgical Assessment and Clinical Proficiency Exam. <https://cvbc.ca/registration/registration-application/>
 - **CVBC Bylaws and the inclusion of Registered Veterinary Technologists** - The CVBC has entered into preliminary discussions with the British Columbia Veterinary Technologists Association to develop appropriate bylaws that would regulate technologists. This activity does not address the shortage of or replace the role of the veterinarian but should enable veterinarians to delegate some responsibilities to their RVT team members.
 - **Standards and Guidelines** – Not specific to the veterinary shortage, but arising out of the impacts of COVID 19, the CVBC continues to review standards and processes to try to utilize virtual platforms to minimize the administrative burden on veterinarians, and to allow for more flexible approaches to the practice of veterinary medicine.
 - The CVBC Practice Facility Accreditation for new clinics has been conducted virtually to enable more timely inspections in a safe and biosecure way. We have found this to be a valuable tool with a higher number of inspections required due to the increasing demand for veterinary care resulting in an increase in the number of new clinics, as well as the expansion of existing clinics to accommodate demand. <https://cvbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Unified-Policy-for-Remote-Virtual-Inspections-during-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf>
 - The CVBC telemedicine guideline was also developed to allow veterinarians to adopt telemedicine as a tool to use in their practice in cases where a patient may not need to be seen in person in order to address a concern or a need. This provides some flexibility for veterinarians when creative solutions may help to lessen the load. <https://cvbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CVBC-Guidelines-Update-Telemedicine-July-2021-FINAL-for-posting.pdf>

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR DECISION

Ref: 195178

Date: August 4, 2021

Title: Minister's Bylaw Standard (MBS) for cannabis production facilities in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Issue: The existing MBS for Medical Marihuana Production Facilities (MMPF) in the ALR is out of date and requires updating.

Background: On July 13, 2018, the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation (the Regulation) relating to MMPF was amended in advance of the federal government legalizing recreational cannabis on October 17, 2018. Specifically, the Regulation was amended to recognize that the production of both medical and recreational cannabis is a permitted farm use in the ALR that local governments cannot prohibit if produced in accordance with the Regulation.

The Ministry's Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas offers standards for local governments who are developing and amending bylaws affecting farming areas. These standards, known as the MBS, relate mainly to zoning bylaws and have been created to promote consistency among local governments in their treatment of farming activities and to minimize conflict around agricultural uses. The standards are written such that they can be adapted to any farming area, although there is likely to be variation in the way they are used, depending on the needs of different local governments. Although not mandatory, local governments are encouraged to adopt these standards within farming areas that exist in their community.

The existing MBS for MMPF in the ALR was published in March 2015 when recreational cannabis production was still illegal.

Discussion: Since recreational cannabis production was legalized in October 2018, many local governments in B.C. have amended their zoning bylaws to accommodate cannabis production within the ALR. The level of local government acceptance with respect to cannabis production varies across the province. Some local governments have recognized the economic opportunity associated with legal cannabis production and, through their zoning, have allowed all types of cannabis production in the ALR. Other local governments, often concerned with nuisances (odour, light, etc.) associated with cannabis production, have taken the opposite approach, and only allow cannabis production methods that are recognized as farm uses in the Regulation.

Many local governments utilized the outdated MBS for MMPF when updating their zoning bylaws with respect to cannabis production within the ALR. Irrespective of their stance on cannabis production in the ALR, many local governments have requested that the Ministry

update the MBS for MMPF to more accurately capture the regulatory framework and current realities of cannabis production in the ALR.

The existing MBS for MMPF was developed when legal production of cannabis was limited, and a great deal of uncertainty existed concerning how cannabis production facilities would impact both the land and the wider community in which they were located. The MBS for MMPF reflected these concerns and was created with the notion that most production facilities would be large scale, concrete style bunkers that would have a significant impact on the land and residents living near these facilities. While commercial, concrete style cannabis production facilities do exist in the ALR, many current applicants within Health Canada's cannabis licensing-system are proposing more small-scale business models, in modest-sized facilities, and/or producing cannabis in an open field. To be an effective tool for local government agricultural planning, the MBS should be updated to reflect these changes.

Updating an MBS is a lengthy process that requires the following steps: internal staff research and analysis, engagement with Ministry staff and other ministries, external consultation with industry groups and local governments and finally, ministerial review and approval. This project is expected to begin in fall 2021 and be complete in late fall 2022.

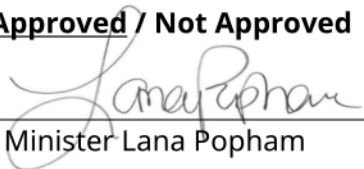
Options:

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Recommendation: s.13

Approved / Not Approved


Minister Lana Popham

October 21, 2021

Date Signed

Contact: Reed Bailey, Land Use Planner, 778-698-3455

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FISHERIES

CLIFF#: 196369

Client / Writer: Mark Raymond

Main issues: AFF Mandate Letter

Bullets prepared by: Multiple Staff Contributions

Date prepared: 2021-10-22

Date due: 2021-10-22

The below bullets outline current AFF actions that support our Mandate Letter commitments:

In the context of COVID-19, improve food security and the safety of workers by continuing to improve conditions for temporary foreign workers and temporary domestic workers in farming communities, with support from the Minister of Labour.

- Labour Unit and Strategy
 - In October 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) created a dedicated Labour Unit to address both COVID-specific circumstances and longstanding concerns with the recruitment and retention (and health and safety) of the agriculture workforce.
 - AFF is seeking a mandate from Cabinet to develop and implement an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy (the Strategy). The Ministry recognizes B.C.'s agriculture sector has endured a growing labour shortage negatively impacting domestic food production and profitability, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires, drought, and broader provincial and global labour shortages.
 - The focus of the Strategy is to safeguard B.C.'s food production and food security through a stable, sufficient, and supported agriculture workforce. The Strategy strives to increase and support domestic participation in agriculture through skills training and incentives; improve the working and living conditions for all members of the agriculture workforce; and support the adoption of labour saving/improving technologies.
- Housing Quality and Inspections
 - Housing inspections, guidelines and requirements for TFW accommodations are complex and at times contradictory. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is responsible for receiving and addressing complaints of abuse and misuse of TFWs, including inadequate accommodations.
 - On October 27, 2020, the federal Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Carla Qualtrough, and the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced the launch of consultation on proposed minimum requirements for employer-provided accommodations for the TFW Program. The federal government has not provided updates following this consultation.
 - The Ministry is aware that there are significant and longstanding limitations to existing housing regulations and inspections, that have been revealed both during the pandemic and during the unprecedented heat wave in June 2021.
 - The proposed Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy includes initiatives to improve housing-related matters through increased coordination with federal government counterparts and streamlining the on-farm accommodations inspections process. This would also include examining whether mid-season and/or random inspections can be introduced and options to introduce third-party objectivity into inspections of on-farm accommodations (currently inspectors are hired by operators).

Expand the Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programs to encourage greater food security and local business growth.

Grow BC:

The Ministry is currently working on rolling out initiatives to support our Enhanced Grow BC programming which contribute to the sectors growth and competitiveness, as well as support our resiliency and improved food security. A few of our recent announcements include:

- **Raspberry Replant Program:**
 - The goal of the Raspberry Replant Program is to revitalize the raspberry industry with raspberry varieties suitable for fresh and individually quick frozen (IQF) raspberry markets.
 - The \$300,000 program will help growers plant raspberry fields and go to strategic sector projects aimed at increasing sector competitiveness.
 - New Raspberry Replant Program funding will make growers in B.C. more competitive, while increasing the bounty of raspberries in the province for fruit lovers.
 - By helping growers with planting costs, we're supporting them advance their businesses and giving people more chances to enjoy B.C. berries. This program will support local families and companies, and make the meals, days and memories of British Columbians that much sweeter in the years ahead.
- **Hazelnut Replant Program:**
 - Hazelnut growers in the province are being offered help planting new trees or removing infected ones through a new intake of the Hazelnut Renewal Program.
 - The program is revitalizing the B.C. hazelnut sector, supporting the dedicated people working in their orchards and encouraging those looking to begin a new career in hazelnut production.
 - Growers with planting or removal projects between April 2021 and December 2021 are eligible for this program.
 - The Hazelnut Renewal Program has \$100,000 for removing EFB-affected trees, planting new orchards or completing strategic sector projects aimed at increasing the sector's competitiveness.
- **Bee Technology & Transfer Program:**
 - We are in the process of working with the BC Honey Producers Association (BCHPA) to set up and deliver the BEE Technology Transfer Program (TTP).
 - The goals of the TTP are:
 - Bringing standardized knowledge and best management practices in areas of integrated pest management, overwintering, bee health outcomes, effective pollination, breeding for regionally hardy queens and bees, and
 - Delivering education, applied research and services to BC's more than 3,600 beekeepers, bridging the knowledge from evidence-based findings into regionally adapted practices.
 - We will be supporting the program with \$525,000 over the next 3 years (2021-2024).

Feed BC:

- Feed BC now has 20 post-secondary institutions, and 6 regional health authorities are now actively partnering, committed to working towards a minimum 30% B.C. food.
- **Priorities for next fiscal:**
 - Customized supports for institutions for B.C. food tracking, procurement and building B.C. supply chain relationships
 - Growing partnerships with other types of government-supported facilities and programs

- Work with industry to develop *new value chains* for B.C. food and beverage products most needed by BC public sector institutions (potential BCAC member involvement)
- Supporting tools and events to connect B.C. supply with B.C. demand (potential BCAC member involvement)

Buy BC:

- Now in Year 3, the Buy BC program includes participation of over 625 local food and beverage farmers and processors, 400 restaurants, 145 farmers' markets, and 75 grocery stores across the province. Buy BC has funded over 240 industry-led marketing projects.
- Key initiatives underway in 2021/22:
 - **Buy BC Partnership Program:** 69 applications totaling \$1.75M were approved for funding in 2021. Applications for the next round of Buy BC funding will open October 26, 2021.
 - **Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL:** Delivering campaign in partnership with BCRFA from October 15 to November 15 featuring 30 days of inspirational stories about restaurants and chefs from different parts of B.C. and encouraging the B.C. consumers to support local businesses.
 - **B.C. Farmers' Markets:** working with BCAFM to deliver Online Farmers' Market platform and exploring partnership with BCFM to expand new Hatch & Hype initiative which showcases new products/vendors. Also providing additional supports to farmer's markets through CAP-funded Farmers' Market Expansion Program (i.e. funding for signage, equipment and infrastructure) to be launched in Nov/Dec.
 - **Buy BC Retail Partnerships:** Partnered with Sobeys on a Buy BC Produce Display Campaign featuring B.C. produce in 67 Thrifty and Safeway grocery stores across the province.
 - **Buy BC Advertising:** Delivered first ad campaign featuring TV, transit and digital ads in July/August. Preparing for second ad campaign in November/December. Campaigns are focused on showcasing the people behind B.C. food production.
 - **Buy BC Consumer Engagement and Promo Materials:** Producing two Buy BC videos in support of the Tree Fruit Stabilization Project; and one Buy BC video featuring Indigenous chefs/producers. Continuing to develop new digital content focused on increasing local food literacy and Buy BC brand awareness among B.C. consumers.
- Priorities for next fiscal:
 - Conducting outreach to commodity organizations to better coordinate Buy BC marketing campaigns across the sector (would appreciate BCAC's support on this).
 - Expanding Buy BC retail partnerships (i.e. Save on Foods, Independent Grocers) and retail-ready promotional materials.
 - Developing Buy BC promotional tools and supports to enhance success of Direct-to-Consumer Marketing initiatives.

Drawing on the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, take steps to make BC a leader in food security and the emerging agri-tech sector, helping B.C. companies that are bringing innovation to agriculture grow, hire more workers and position our province as an agri-tech leader, while protecting farmland in the ALR.

With support from the Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, lead work to develop a new Regenerative Agricultural Network, which will create jobs for workers, opportunities for farmers and greater food security by bringing together natural systems of production with agri-technologies that enhance production.

- Agritech
 - The Province is committed to supporting the growth of B.C.'s agritech sector through tailored supports for varying stages of companies. In particular, the Ministry recently held an RFP process to select a delivery partner to design and implement a pilot program offering business services to B.C. agritech companies in order to support their growth trajectory.
 - Subject to contract negotiations, the new pilot program will launch in fall 2021, providing market validation training and mentorship, coaching and networking supports to B.C. agritech companies, while also offering insights to the Province for potential future delivery models.
 - The new program will be closely connected to other initiatives that support the agritech and agriculture sectors in B.C., such as the Agritech Concierge and the Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network.
- RegenBC/RAAN
 - To inform the next stage of the Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network (RAAN) planning, the Ministry recently hosted a free virtual regenerative agriculture and agritech conference, regenBC, which brought together postsecondary partners, food security experts, agriculture sector organizations, farmers and leaders in private sector science and innovation to hear different perspectives on how combining regenerative agriculture and agritech can help farmers, food security and the environment.
 - The event was a success; over 500 individuals including farmers, industry associations, academia and industry businesses registered for the conference. The event generated considerable interest in the RAAN.
- Innovation Program
 - Through Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) Innovation programming, the Ministry funds late-stage research, pilot/demonstration, and commercialization/adoption of innovative products, processes, practices and technologies for the agriculture and food sector.
 - A two-stage application process for the Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program (CBCAIP) is currently underway. The delivery partner (IAF) recently received and reviewed Statements of Interest from interested applicants and shortlisted candidates will soon be invited to submit their full project applications.
 - Up to \$1.5 million is available through the current CBCAIP intake, and new projects are expected to occur between April and December of 2022.
 - Next steps include establishing a RAAN Advisory Council to guide the planning and priorities for the RAAN. This Advisory Council will consist of post secondary partners, industry associations and special advisors. Establishment of the Advisory Council is targeted for this winter.

Support the work of the Minister of Education to help make sure students are properly fed for learning, working with school districts to create more local school meal programs based on district data and priorities, by integrating Feed BC into this plan so that districts can include locally grown food.

- Ministry is working with the Ministry of Education, as the lead, to support planning for the school meals mandate commitment.
 - The Ministry of Education established a web-based school food data collection, enabling school districts to provide information on the school food programs provided in each

school in their district. All public-school districts were asked to participate and to date 1000 schools in BC have completed the survey.

- Next fiscal planning will continue on how the Feed BC program can be introduced in the public K-12 school system.

Support the work of the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to increase food security for people in need by expanding our supports to food banks and developing program partnerships with food producers, grocery stores and not-for-profits to develop discounted food market, food recovery and food redistribution programs.

- Initiated discussions with Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction on understand non-profit food purchasing, current funding, and needs to support increased food security for people in need.
- Priority for next fiscal is to understand how to better coordinate supports, identify partnership opportunities, and leverage funding provided food programs to support the B.C. agriculture and food sector.

A better future through fighting climate change: In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.

- CleanBC includes strategies and actions to meet BC's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets, support the transition to low-carbon clean growth, and build resilience by adapting to climate change risks.
- On October 25, the BC government released the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030, strengthening actions to ensure that BC achieves its targeted 40% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030.
- The new Roadmap includes a pathway for the agriculture sector to reduce its emissions.
- Consistent with what we heard when we engaged with stakeholders over the last few months, the Roadmap recognizes that the sector is in the early stages of moving towards decarbonization, therefore the focus needs to be on working together to build capacity, advance research and development, pilot adoption of technologies and practices that increase GHG efficiencies and enhance agricultural carbon sinks, and develop frameworks to measure and track results.
- CleanBC also recognizes the critical importance of food production in BC, and the need for farmers and ranchers to build resilience to the devastating effects of climate risks such as heat waves, severe droughts and dangerous wildfires – all of which were experienced this past summer.
- BC's draft Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy, released for comment in June, contains proposed actions to support resilience in the agriculture sector, especially in the critical areas of water infrastructure and on-farm adaptation to address climate risks.
- Priorities for agriculture have been directly informed by engagement with the sector in 2020 and 2021, and by the significant climate adaptation work that AFF and industry have partnered together on over the past decade, including Regional Adaptation Strategies for agriculture in eight key regions.

Wild Salmon, Watershed Security Strategy, Provincial Coastal Strategy – BCAC have indicated that these mandate priorities will not be included in the discussion.