

# Toward A Resilient Agricultural Community

The Langley Local Farm Organization Study – Mayor and Council Version



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## INTRODUCTION

The Township of Langley's 2013 Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) is one of the key guiding documents for the development of Township policies and plans that supports the agricultural industry, land or producers of Langley. Its purpose is to identify "ways the Township of Langley can proactively support agricultural development leading to more local food production, more full-time employment, and more sustainable development," based on the ultimate goal that "Increased agricultural production will create economic development that improves the local economy and provides jobs and opportunities for local citizens."<sup>1</sup>

Among its recommended initiatives in the area of "Providing a welcoming business environment", the AVS identifies a need for partnerships that support agricultural production and viability, important for encouraging agricultural development. But a survey conducted in the process of developing the AVS had also indicated that farmers need a stronger voice, particularly "as the community continues to urbanize and farmer numbers decline relative to the non-farm community," when it may become increasingly difficult for issues of importance to the farm sector to receive attention.<sup>2</sup>

As a potential solution the AVS points to Farmers' Institutes, which are provincially-recognized, farmer-run non-profit organizations – a model that is discussed in depth in this report – as a way "to represent farmers at the local level, regardless of the commodity they produce."<sup>3</sup>

Specifically, the AVS recommends the following action to the Township of Langley, in order "to encourage partnerships to expand agricultural production":

### Initiative 2.1.3:

"[T]o review the merits of having a local farm organization such as a Farmers' Institute to better represent the views of the entire Township's farm community and to promote the development of a local organization if considered important by the farm community."<sup>4</sup>

This task was originally allocated to what was then the Township of Langley Agricultural Advisory Committee. This committee has since been combined with another Township committee to form the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee (AAEEC).

In February 2019 the AAEEC and the Township of Langley Council endorsed a proposal from an independent non-profit, Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) to conduct this review through its Langley Small Farm Network program.

As per the AVS, this project has been formulated around the benefits of partnerships, for farmers and the agricultural industry as a whole. It identifies gaps in existing partnerships, and reviews the opportunity of forming a new agricultural organization to fill some of these, including to give a direct voice for farmers in the Township of Langley. Specifically, this review assesses the possible models for a farm organization, including those used in other BC municipalities, and the effectiveness of each. During the course of the project, a new Farmers' Institute did in fact form in Langley, so rather than

<sup>1</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p2

<sup>2</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p26 (2.1.3 Partnerships).

<sup>3</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p26 (2.1.3 Partnerships).

<sup>4</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p26 (2.1.3 Partnerships).



recommend a model, this report makes recommendations for the Farmers' Institute, as well as for the Township of Langley, and other key partners influencing agriculture in Langley.

Funding for this project was provided to Langley Environmental Partners Society by the Township of Langley, as allocated in the AVS, including in-kind support from staff and the AAEEC. LEPS is a unique, non-profit, partnership driven society that provides a bridge between community, business and government, including by fostering community cooperation through additional partnerships with teaching institutions and community associations. LEPS is a longstanding partner of the Township of Langley where the majority of its projects have been located, including the promotion of agricultural stewardship.

LEPS developed the Langley Small Farm Network program in 2018 to identify gaps in resources for small-scale farmers, a particular need in Langley due to the high degree of parcelization in this municipality with 73% of the ALR parcels in Langley under ten acres,<sup>5</sup> and no commodity association serving small or mixed-production farms. By the beginning of this project, the work of the Small Farm Network project had already involved extensive engagement with Langley farmers, which positioned LEPS well for this project. LEPS began the project in February 2019, with an interim presentation to the AAEEC in October 2019. This Draft Report was presented to the AAEEC in September 2020.



*Photo: Mark Forsythe*

<sup>5</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p14 (Introduction).

### Summary of Findings

The following are the findings of this review, as they pertain to “the merits of having a local farm organization, such as a Farmers’ Institute, to better represent the views of the entire Township’s farm community”<sup>6</sup>:

*FIGURE 1 - Recommendations*

Recommendations:
<p><b>1. The Township of Langley</b> (the “Township”) recognizes the Langley Farmers’ Institute as a body that represents Langley farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Township refers to the Institute to disseminate information of relevance to farmers</li> <li>b. The Township will engage the Institute as a means to consult with farmers, where and when relevant and appropriate, and as determined by Council</li> <li>c. The Township will appoint one director of the Institute to serve on the Township Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee, as determined and considered by Council</li> <li>d. The Township will afford the Institute regular opportunities, balanced with other Committee priorities, to provide updates on Institute activities, events, and projects to the Township’s Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee, as well as annually to Council, to maintain engagement and positive communications</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. The Langley Farmers’ Institute</b> performs due diligence to represent, advocate for and serve Langley farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Institute will strive to provide a coordinated voice, and represent and advocate for Langley farmers’ interests</li> <li>b. The Institute will continue to pursue a cross-commodity membership, aspiring for a broad representation of Langley’s farmers</li> <li>c. The Institute will continue to offer voting memberships to current farmers only, and engage non-farmers in other ways</li> <li>d. The Institute will advocate for and assist, where and as appropriate, in the implementation of the Township of Langley’s Agricultural Viability Strategy as well as the implementation of other agricultural studies, strategies and policies</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p26 (2.1.3 Partnerships).

## The Review Process

The primary goal of this Study is to analyze the relationships between the local agencies that influence farming in the Township of Langley, and specifically to explore the potential role of the newly formed Langley Farmers' Institute in relation to these other agencies.

In studying the merits of establishing a local farm organization, LEPS approached the agricultural sector in Langley as a dynamic system, consisting of multiple interacting participants including institutions, government agencies, private businesses, decision-makers, community-based organizations, and farmers, all of whom influence the character of this system and play a role in supporting the functions of the farmers and the farming community at the centre. Understanding this system in terms of its component parts, or the 'participants', involves identifying the key contributions participants make or could be making, and where changes to the roles of these participants could benefit the agricultural community in the Township of Langley.

The Township of Langley's 2019 Agricultural Profile sets a goal for "a resilient farm sector"<sup>7</sup>. In ecological terms, resilience is "the ability of a system to continue functioning amid, and recover from, a disturbance", ranging from slow to sudden disruptions. A resilient system, such as a community or an industry, is able to adapt to disturbances without compromising its functions or the health of the system as a whole.<sup>8</sup> A disturbance to the agricultural sector of Langley might be caused by factors such as climate change, urbanization, commodity price fluctuations, population changes, or even legislative changes.

More specifically, a resilient community is defined as "one that take intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of social and economic change."<sup>9</sup>

As in natural ecosystems, two factors can determine the resilience of a system such as that of the agricultural community of Langley: the "interconnectedness" of the system's participants, and the overlap between them.<sup>10</sup>

Over the course of this review, LEPS assessed some of the system participants – governmental and non-profit agencies – that currently serve Langley's farmers. It identified key unmet needs that are impacting the resilience of this sector. Then it conducted a review of different models of farm organizations and their effectiveness in contributing to the filling these identified gaps, utilizing community engagement with Langley farmers and interviews with key farm organization representatives from across BC and from within Langley.

The primary model recommended by the AVS is a Farmers' Institute. During the course of this Study, a new Farmers' Institute was formed in the Township of Langley and gained status as a legal entity. However, it is not assumed that this organization will be a panacea for all issues facing the agricultural community in Langley, but as an organization in its infancy its scope is yet still malleable and the relationship between the Institute, the Township of Langley, and other agencies very much in development. Therefore, some recommendations of this report pertain to this Farmers' Institute to help it fill gaps as able.

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<sup>7</sup> *Township of Langley Agricultural Profile* (2019), p2.

<sup>8</sup> "Ecological Resilience", Encyclopedia Britannica.

<sup>9</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p5.

<sup>10</sup> "Ecological Resilience", Encyclopedia Britannica.



This report is organized in five parts: an overview of the current roles played in Langley's agricultural system; a summary of community engagement conducted; an analysis of the gaps that emerge therein; a review of the possible models of farm organizations, and their effectiveness in meeting existing needs; and recommendations for the Township of Langley and the Langley Farmers' Institute to proceed. Additional information and supporting evidence are provided in the Appendices.

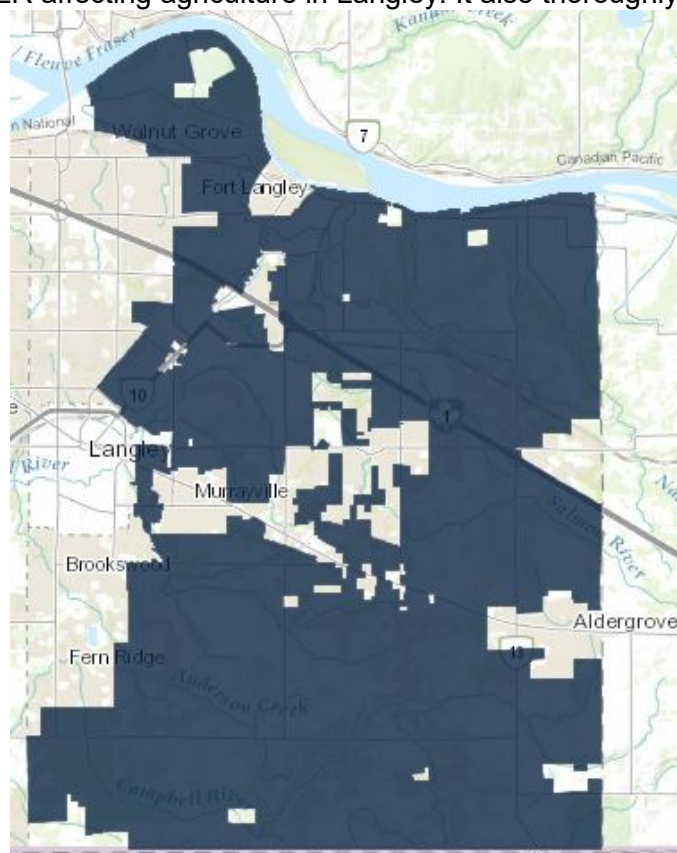
While ultimately evaluating the resilience of the agricultural community in Langley is beyond the scope of this report, over the course of the review much preliminary work was conducted that might form the foundation of such a project. In addition to the formal recommendations of this report for the Township of Langley and the Langley Farmers' Institute, additional possible steps for these and other organizations are included, and relevant findings are documented in the Appendices.

### Preface: Agriculture in Langley

The Township of Langley is the municipality with the greatest number of farms in Metro Vancouver. A thorough review of the state of agriculture in Langley, as indicated by the 2016 Census, is provided by the *Township of Langley Agricultural Profile*, a 2019 update of the 2011 profile (as mandated by AVS Initiative 2.1.2, "Support ongoing monitoring of selected indicators affecting agriculture in the Township"<sup>11</sup>). This extremely thorough document reviews the history, policy frameworks, biophysical characteristics, and human modifications to the ALR affecting agriculture in Langley. It also thoroughly reviews the characteristics of Township farms, including agricultural production, farm economics, and commodity profiles.

In brief, it notes that the Township agricultural sector is characterized by diverse crops and livestock operations, with annual gross farm receipts of \$340 million, the highest in Metro Vancouver and third highest in BC. There are nearly 11,000 hectares in production by 1100 operations averaging 10 hectares (24.8 acres) each, but the majority of farms are under 4 hectares (10 acres). 64% of all farms earned less than \$25,000 in 2016.<sup>12</sup>

Key assets in the Township include excellent soils, a temperate climate, and proximity to Vancouver markets and amenities; key barriers to production are both irrigation and drainage infrastructure. The report concludes that agriculture in Langley sees "an array of social, environmental, and economic challenges and opportunities."<sup>13</sup>



Distribution of Agricultural Land Reserve zoning in the Township of Langley

<sup>11</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p24 (2.1.2 AAC).

<sup>12</sup> *Township of Langley Agricultural Profile* (2019), p1-2.

<sup>13</sup> *Township of Langley Agricultural Profile* (2019), p2.

## PARTICIPANTS IN THE LANGLEY AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY SYSTEM

The Township of Langley Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS) identifies a need for partnerships that support agricultural production, viability and development in the Township. This review therefore begins with assessment of the partnerships benefitting agriculture in Langley, then offers a gap analysis to help formulate the needs that a farm organization, like the Langley Farmers' Institute, could contribute to.

These partnerships are formed between institutions, agencies, private businesses, decision-makers and farmers themselves, and together they influence the functions of a dynamic and complex system that is Langley's agricultural community. Each of these participants or components of the system offers a unique set of resources to Langley's agricultural community, but also requires its own resources such as funding and labour (both paid and volunteer).

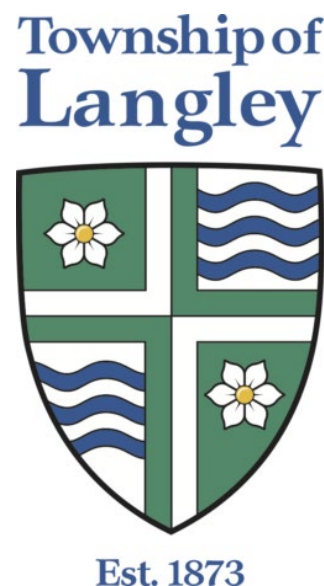
Ideally these participants in the agricultural community system would ensure that the needs of the industry and individual farmers are met, so that agriculture is ecologically, economically and socially sustainable in Langley. In a truly resilient system, some overlap between these agencies actually ensures that a "disturbance" to the system that affects one agency will not leave the agricultural community vulnerable, while complete redundancy between agencies could mean over-demand on the resources that sustain them.

Langley is home to over a dozen such agencies with agricultural mandates or with agriculture-related interests and programming. This section provides a general overview of the characteristics of the participants in the agricultural community in Langley, including key Langley-based organizations and agencies identified in the AVS,<sup>14</sup> plus others that have emerged since its writing, including the Langley Farmers' Institute, Langley Environmental Partners Society, the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation, the Township Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee, Langley post-secondary institutions, and the Township of Langley itself.

### Municipal Government

The **Township of Langley** ("the Township"), as mandated by the *Local Government Act*, serves a key land management function. Council is empowered to make decisions regarding the use of land and therefore has a large degree of influence in the lives of its residents and business owners, including Langley's farmers, particularly regarding the conditions in which they operate. Through Council decision making various policies and regulations are developed, some in the form of bylaws that guide development and the use of land, business licensing, building permits, and broader community plans, strategies and regulations.

Since 1997 the Township of Langley has been a "regulated" community under the *Local Government Act* (Sections 479 - 481 and 551 - 553)<sup>15</sup>. In part, this means that the Township of Langley has the ability to apply to the Minister of Agriculture to approve bylaws that regulate farming. Examples of



<sup>14</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p95 (The AAC / ToL and Partners)

<sup>15</sup> Right to Farm Regulation 261/97.



these include the Township's Feed Lot Control Bylaw, Cannabis Production Farm Bylaw, and Audible Bird Scare Devices Farm Bylaw.

Many of the responsibilities for implementation of Council policy and direction are provided by the Township of Langley's **Community Development Division**, which makes it a primary interface between Langley farmers and the Township as a body, processing many applications and permits, and preparing for Council consideration policies that regulate farming activities.

As of January 2019 the Community Development Division has been served by a new "agricultural planner" position, whose role includes implementing the Agricultural Viability Strategy, acting as staff liaison for the AAEEC and LSAF, and preparing and interpreting farm bylaws, policies and guidelines<sup>16</sup> Over time, the agricultural planner role is intended to grow in its responsibilities and become the 'go-to' staff member in the coordination and facilitation of agricultural related enquiries. It is hoped that the agricultural planner position may advance synchronization of governance and foster relationships between the Township of Langley and other participants in the agricultural community, including Langley farmers. The position is not dedicated to agriculture only, as it also encompasses contributing to other policy planning projects, but these could also be opportunities for this individual to share their agricultural expertise with the wider department and contribute to a culture of awareness and support for agriculture in Langley.

To assist Council in their decision-making capacity, the Council forms a series of Advisory Committees, one of which is the **Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee (AAEEC)**. The Township of Langley AAEEC combines a former Agricultural Advisory Committee with an Economic Enhancement Committee. Its mandate is "to consider and provide advice to Township Council and staff regarding plans, policies, programs, and strategies that are focused on maintaining and enhancing the Township's overall economy including, but not limited to, its agricultural sector." It notes that "The Committee is to ensure that it keeps a strong focus in its work on maintaining and enhancing the agricultural sector within the Township."<sup>17</sup>

Appointed by Council in consideration of "Langley's diversity in agricultural and economic activities," the Council Advisory Committee Establishment Bylaw requires that the AAEEC consist of nine voting members, including one youth, four members representing the agricultural industry, and four members representing general business and economic development industry, plus two non-voting councillors, one of whom serves as Co-Chair alongside a citizen Co-Chair. Membership is intended to be balanced between agricultural and economic representatives; however, in practice there is not always a full slate of active, full-time farmers on the committee.

Of the AAEEC's seventeen responsibilities, those that pertain to agriculture and to the focus of this Study are to:

- Establish and facilitate on-going communication between the rural/agricultural community and Council, regarding agricultural issues/opportunities

<sup>16</sup> Planner I Job Details (posted November 21, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Township of Langley Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee Terms of Reference, <https://www.tol.ca/connect/get-involved/council-advisory-committees/agricultural-advisory-and-economic-enhancement-committee/>

- Advise Council on rural/agricultural issues
- Make recommendations on all aspects of the rural community, including land use, municipal services/infrastructure, environmental issues, and socio-economic matters
- Assist in developing and implementing a strategy to sustain the agricultural community, improve agricultural viability, encourage the advancement of the agricultural sector while respecting rural lifestyles, and enhance “good neighbour” communications
- Review and comment on issues, plans, and specific development applications that are referred to the Committee by Council or staff
- Promote awareness of rural issues in Langley across the broader population
- Promote tourism and economic development initiatives with a rural or agricultural theme, including the promotion of Township farm products<sup>18</sup>

The AAEEC meets approximately seven times per year. Agricultural matters considered at AAEEC meetings include the planning of an annual farm tour, presentations from the Township agricultural planner regarding progress on implementing the Agricultural Viability Strategy, and receiving presentations from MVRD staff regarding policies that affect agriculture, among other tasks based on an annual Council-adopted AAEEC work plan. The AAEEC also has the ability to form working groups to meet additionally and focus on specific tasks.

The AVS recommends the participation of the Township’s agricultural advisory committee on many action items, and that it generally play “a key role in implementation by providing co-ordination and leadership.”<sup>19</sup>

From time to time, Township Council directs, endorses and appoints Task Forces to work on a distinct and focused piece of work. An example of this is the **Blueberry Canon Task Force**, which was created to engage with the community to support the development of the Audible Bird Scare Devices Farm Bylaw in 2013.

A more recent example is the **Farming Task Force**, the formation of which was endorsed by Council in February 2020 to “investigate the future of farming, the need for farming protection and assistance to small and medium sized farms, [and] food security provisions and related regulations.”<sup>20</sup> The AAEEC has been directed by Council to prepare an Agricultural Impact Assessment framework that will form part of the work of the Farming Task Force.

In addition to the above, the Township of Langley maintains a representative on the Metro Vancouver Agricultural Advisory Committee. This representative has not historically been a member of the Township AAEEC or other formal committees.

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<sup>18</sup> Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting minutes, Attachment A (January 27, 2016), p12-13.

<sup>19</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p23-24 (2.1.2 Agricultural Advisory Committee).

<sup>20</sup> “Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee Recommended Motion File 0540-20,” Township of Langley Council Minutes, February 10, 2020.

### Key Township of Langley Documents

The **Agricultural Viability Strategy (AVS)** is a key document produced by the Township and endorsed by Council in 2013, to “address farm viability issues...; focus on the development of broad policy directions for the future of farming in the Township; encourage and enhance farming in a balanced manner; provide an implementation strategy that focuses on solutions to agricultural issues; provide a communications plan as part of the implementation strategy to improve agricultural awareness and understanding; [and] ensure a partnership initiative to maximize partnerships and community cooperation.”<sup>21</sup>

The AVS “vision for the future” is that “The Township of Langley supports agriculture while fostering and encouraging sustainable and viable production. Farmers are respected and appreciated for their contributions to the community and its citizens.”<sup>22</sup> The document categorizes its 34 recommended initiatives under four overarching goals:

- Providing a welcoming business environment for farming
- Providing required services and infrastructure
- Providing a secure agricultural land base
- Supporting farmer use of best farm management practices<sup>23</sup>

The AAEEC<sup>24</sup> plays a key role in “assist[ing] in developing and implementing a strategy to sustain the agricultural community, improve agricultural viability, encourage the advancement of the agricultural sector while respecting rural lifestyles, and enhance “good neighbour” communications”.<sup>25</sup>



## Agricultural Viability Strategy



Endorsed by  
Council on July 15, 2013

<sup>21</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p17 (Introduction).

<sup>22</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p18 (Introduction).

<sup>23</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p14-15 (Introduction).

<sup>24</sup> Advisory Committees of Council are established by the *Council Advisory Committee Establishment Bylaw* 2008, No. 4700, as amended from time to time. Amendments to the Bylaw in 2015 established the AAEEC that, in part, replaced a former Agricultural Advisory Committee, alluded to in Subsection 2.1.2 of the AVS. As outlined in the AAEEC Terms of Reference, the AAEEC is now responsible for implementing the AVS.

<sup>25</sup> Township of Langley Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee Terms of Reference, <https://www.tol.ca/connect/get-involved/council-advisory-committees/agricultural-advisory-and-economic-enhancement-committee/>, p2.

The Township of Langley **Sustainability Charter** is another important document guiding action by Council and staff and was itself the guiding document for the Agricultural Viability Strategy. It defines the Township's "Sustainability Vision", "to build a legacy for future generations by leading and committing the community to a lifestyle that is socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally balanced." It lists four "sustainability principles": leadership, long term commitment, community involvement, and regular reporting. It notes that "Council believes that open, inclusive and consultative community involvement is vital to effective decision making."<sup>26</sup> Many specific goals relate to agriculture, as well as to community engagement and support in general.

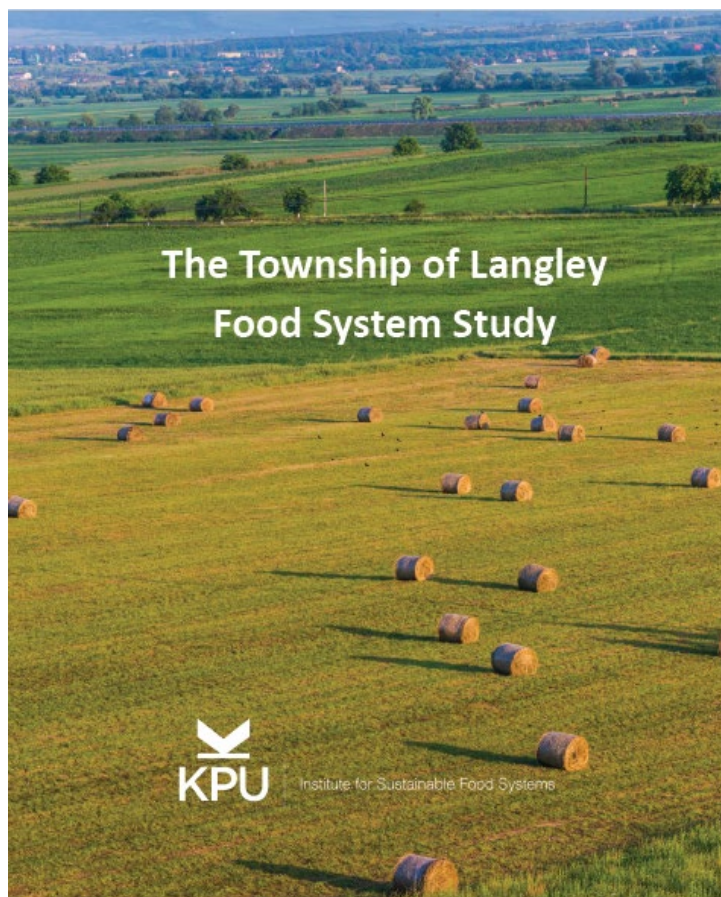
### Educational Institutions

Langley is served by School District #35 and two post-secondary institutions: the primary campus of Trinity Western University and the Langley campus of Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU).

**School District #35** is currently engaged in conversation with the Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (LSAF) and Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) to develop a curriculum for Langley secondary students around agriculture and career opportunities incorporating hands-on experience at the Langley Learning Farm, endorsed by the Township of Langley to be developed on Township land.

**Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU)** is a post-secondary institution with a campus that straddles the City and Township of Langley border, which houses its Institute for Sustainable Horticulture. The school also offers, at another campus, an Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS), which aspires to act as an extension organization for organic and/or small-scale producers in BC. Of note, ISFS was funded by the Township of Langley to conduct a study of the Township's food system, looking at the possible impacts of bringing underutilized land into production, as well as focussing agricultural production on the local market.<sup>27</sup>

The KPU study finds "significant potential for the Township to increase the amount of food produced locally by expanding production onto under-utilized farmable land" resulting in a "theoretically high level of food self-reliance..."<sup>28</sup> It identifies a need for access to land, along with business and training



<sup>26</sup> "Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee Recommended Motion File 0540-20," Township of Langley Council Minutes, February 10, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> *The Township of Langley Food System Study*, Polasub, Hansen & Mullinix, KPU (2018), p23.

<sup>28</sup> *The Township of Langley Food System Study*, Polasub, Hansen & Mullinix, KPU (2018), p23.



resources, especially to promote the utilization of small parcels that are vulnerable to inflation of prices beyond the access of farmers. It recommends processing facilities, and aggregation, distribution and retail services, particularly serving small farms and possibly utilizing cooperative models. It also identifies a need for support of improved environmental impacts, through manure management and soil carbon sequestration.<sup>29</sup>

Also important, and possibly not maximized, **Trinity Western University (TWU)** has its primary campus in the Township, and its faculty are often very engaged in the community, conducting research on agricultural and environmental issues.

### Community-Based Organizations

Langley is served by many community-based organizations (CBOs), with various degrees of focus on agricultural services.

The **Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (LSAF)** is a society consisting of a board of directors (approximately ten to 12) who come from various agricultural professions, including farmers, academics, consultants, commodity associations, and retirees from these fields. Founded in 2011 with close support and funding from the Township of Langley, its constitution is to increase public education by providing information, courses, seminars and workshops; encourage and support all entrants to agriculture; better the public's understanding of agricultural issues; support local food and agricultural production; promote land stewardship practices; and support the protection and sustainability of farmland.<sup>30</sup> Many of its early directors sat on the Township Agricultural Viability Strategy Task Force.

LSAF has focused on three projects over the past few years. The primary one has been a “payment for ecosystem services” pilot project recommended by the Agricultural Viability Strategy: Initiative 2.4.7, to “Undertake a pilot project to support the principles of the Ecological Services Initiative.”<sup>31</sup> LSAF concluded this project early in 2020 with a recommendation – to continue the project, but due to the challenge its all-volunteer board faced in administering the project, to do so with paid staff. They suggested this position could be hosted by the Township itself, or by LSAF, LEPS, the Langley Farmers’ Institute, or some combination of these.<sup>32</sup>

LSAF’s second focus has been on the development of an educational site, called the Langley Learning Farm, to promote agricultural awareness and education. It will ultimately introduce youth to agriculture and raise public awareness of the history of agriculture in Langley in partnership, primarily with LEPS. By early 2020, LSAF had obtained preliminary funding to develop this program, and signed a license for five years’ use of a roughly-two-acre portion of the Township Derek Doubleday Arboretum park for this purpose. It is in discussions with Langley Senior Secondary to develop a credited course starting in the fall of 2020.

LSAF has also offered an educational event in the fall. This is an implementation of AVS action 2.1.8, to “Provide seminars or workshops to encourage farming options,” and 2.1.13, to “Initiate seminars

<sup>29</sup> *The Township of Langley Food System Study*, Polasub, Hansen & Mullinix, KPU (2018), p23-28.

<sup>30</sup> “Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Constitution” (revised 2017), p1.

<sup>31</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p13 (Introduction).

<sup>32</sup> “Final Report of the Langley Ecological Services Initiative 2015-2019 to the Township of Langley” (2020), p19

and workshops on topics for productive farm businesses on smaller land parcels ...”<sup>33</sup> This had been offered in 2015 but was not repeated until 2019 due to limited availability of directors, who were administrating the ESI project during the interim years.

LSAF’s constitution also allows for it to “solicit, receive, hold and accept funds” and “administer gifts and bequests in trust for present or future projects.”<sup>34</sup> LSAF has previously pursued obtaining charitable status but had been informed that its constitution was too broad to do so. If it did obtain this status, then, like LEPS, it would be unable to engage in any political activity (which it does not currently do) but could access a broader range of funding. LSAF has expressed interest in narrowing its scope, focussing more either on education, or on raising and redistributing funds.

**Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS)** is a charitable organization whose work includes supporting stewardship of agricultural land, particularly of riparian areas, and promotion of agro-ecological best management practices. The Agricultural Stewardship program offers manure management best practices and, when funding is available, restoration services for public and private acreages in targeted watersheds. As part of this program, LEPS partnered with LSAF to conduct restoration work on some of the properties participating in the ESI project and continues to seek further opportunities for riparian restoration work.



*LEPS hosts many projects that engage or serve farmers, including an annual seed-focussed event.*

LEPS also administrates Langley Eats Local, an awareness campaign which operates educational displays in public areas across Langley, promoting local and seasonal food purchasing practices, as well as food preservation and food waste reduction. It organizes an annual “eat local” event, often in partnership with the Langley Community Farmers Market Society, Tourism Langley and LOCO BC. It also delivers an extensive educational program for elementary-age students focused on food production and the broader food system. LEPS is partnering with LSAF on the Langley Learning Farm,

<sup>33</sup> *Agricultural Viability Strategy* (2013), p9 (Introduction).

<sup>34</sup> “Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Constitution” (revised 2017), p1.

for which LEPS will be leveraging its experience in public education (mentioned above, as well as two full-time staff for other environmental education programming) to administrate the educational aspects of the project.

The Langley Small Farm Network, incubated by LEPS, has been developing association-type services for small-scale farmers: facilitating networking between farmers, hosting and cross-promoting professional development opportunities, and seeking opportunities for better support of small-scale producers. LEPS is open to transferring this project to another organization with more of an agriculture focus, potentially job-sharing or offering office space to continue to support the initiative.

**Tourism Langley** is a non-profit organization that serves businesses in the Township of Langley. Its board of directors includes a “food and beverage” representative who may be a farmer. Tourism Langley’s marketing efforts include promotion of local purchasing practices, as well as tourism opportunities in Langley agriculture through the Circle Farm Tour guide, listing 24 agri-tourism businesses in the Township.

Also worth noting is the **Langley Community Farmers Market Society**, which has managed a farmers’ market at the KPU Langley campus since 2009. It has been a member of the BC Association of Farmers’ Markets, whose members adhere to rules limiting vendors to those who “make, bake or grow” their wares, ensuring they support farmers and farm-product vendors. However, this market is on hiatus for 2020 due to declining participation and attendance in 2019.

Langley’s commodity-producing farmers are served by **commodity associations** like the BC Blueberry Council, BC Cranberry Growers’ Association, and BC Landscape and Nursery Association, many of which in turn are represented by the BC Agriculture Council.

Langley also hosts multiple localized **4-H Clubs**, which each has a different production or farm-practice focus for its members, such as swine or rabbits.

The **Langley Horse and Farm Federation** is an equestrian-focused organization that is no longer very active, but like LSAF was initially established with Township support.

### Langley Farmers’ Institute

The Langley Farmers’ Institute requires particular attention in this report. Like many BC communities, historically Langley had several Institutes, which eventually dissolved over the years. (See the section on “Farmers’ Institutes” for more information on this model.) The last surviving of these was the Fort Langley Farmers’ Institute, which ceased reporting to the BC Ministry of Agriculture around 2000.

A new Langley Farmers’ Institute formed in November 2019, almost immediately following the community engagement undertaken as part of this review. From that event, twelve members of the community convened to write the constitution and bylaws for a new Farmers’ Institute for Langley. Based on the requirements of the Farmers and Womens Institutes Act, the constitution of the new Langley Farmers’ Institute is:

- To improve conditions which support permanent, viable and prosperous farming;
- To promote and facilitate community awareness of and involvement in agricultural initiatives and food systems;

- To promote the theory and practice of agriculture;
- To advance food security by facilitating unimpeded agricultural production and the safety and security of producers so engaged;
- To enter into agreements with other organizations to advance the objectives of the institute;
- To arrange on behalf of its members for the purchase, distribution or sale of commodities, supplies or products;
- To act generally on behalf of its members in all matters pertaining to agricultural pursuits, including all matters incidental to agricultural land and development; and
- To engage in any activity incidental to the achievement of the above objectives.<sup>35</sup>

In crafting its bylaws the Institute made a few specific decisions. The first was to limit voting membership to current farmers. This ensures that the positions taken by the Institute are decided upon by those who stand to gain or lose by the outcome. For ease of interpretation and avoidance of potential controversy, they chose to define current farmers as those with BC Assessment farm status on their property (or the property they lease).

The Institute also elected to allow farming youth as young as fourteen to be voting members. Non-farmers (and youth under fourteen) are able to become non-voting members and are encouraged to join, participate, and even contribute to committees, as they are acknowledged to bring value to the Institute, bridging between farmers and Langley's other residents.

The Institute held its first general meeting in December 2019, and first annual general meeting in February 2020. It has over 25 farming members at present count, including producers of dairy, sheep, poultry, trees, honey, hay, nuts and vegetables/greens. Its membership also includes at least five non-farmers, who are either aspiring to enter/return to the industry or who consider themselves "friends of farming".

The Langley Farmers' Institute was proud to send a delegate to the provincial Farmers' Institutes conference in November 2019. It has also benefitted from the research conducted as part of this review. The Institute is prioritizing strategic planning for 2020, its first year in operation. Its board has eight directors, including one who is also a director of LSAF, one who is also a member of the AAEEC, and one who serves on the board of Tourism Langley. The directors and members have been anticipating the results of this report and the opportunity to incorporate its findings into their strategic planning.

As with any new member-based organization, the primary challenge they expect for this first year is soliciting engagement from farmers who already feel served by their commodity associations, especially those who are already committing time and energy as volunteers there. However, they anticipate that as the Institute acts on issues that are relevant to them – especially ones that are not being addressed by any other organization – participation will grow.

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<sup>35</sup> "Langley Farmers' Institute Constitution" (2019).



**Other**

Other participants of note in the Langley agricultural system include:

- A collective of farmers in Fort Langley that lobbied the Township in response to flooding allegedly caused by development.
- The Fort Langley Farmers Market and the Aldergrove Farmers Market, which appear to be privately-run by one company that occasionally tests other locations around Langley, and like the Langley Community Farmers Market Society, is a member of the BC Association of Farmers Markets.



## KEY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community consultation undertaken for this review consisted of a formal, facilitated community engagement event in October 2019, followed by meetings with a focus group (comprised of both participants and other farmers who had been unable to attend). This was supplemented by information gathered during the existing activities of the Langley Small Farm Network (roundtable events, a questionnaire and interviews). Full details on each public event can be found under “Community Engagement” in the appendix, plus an anonymized summary of comments gathered.

Of particular note is the October 27 community engagement event. It was promoted through a press release, social media, via commodity associations, and by word-of-mouth through well-connected members of the community. About 50 members of the community attended, representing a broad spectrum of producers: it was roughly evenly divided between relatively new, experienced, and multi-generational farmers; there were at least ten representatives from each of the primary categories –

*FIGURE 2 – Township of Langley Agricultural Community Needs*



livestock (including poultry and equine), crops (including vegetables, fruits, berries and greens), and forage – with some overlap between each, and additional producers outside these categories.

The event began with an overview of the research that had been conducted to that point of possible farm organization models, taking particular time to explain Farmers' Institutes. Participants then were asked what services Langley's agricultural community needs, and where they, as individuals, might be willing to invest their own time. They chose from a list of topics, including "other", to discuss in small groups in three rounds, recording the discussion. These notes were then translated live into a visual map of the topics that had been discussed and concerns expressed by participants, with opportunity for participants to comment on the completeness of the map, illustrated in Figure 2.

This event was followed by four meetings with a volunteer focus group. In an attempt to reflect the demographics of farmers in Langley, this group consisted of a mix of large, medium and small producers, a mix of levels of experience, and a mix of products, although volunteers were not found for all products or production types. To protect anonymity, comments collected have been aggregated into the summary under "Community Engagement" in the Appendix.

## GAP ANALYSIS

As highlighted previously, part of the goal of this Langley Local Farm Organization Study is to conduct a preliminary gap analysis of the agencies involved in the Township of Langley agricultural system. This preliminary understanding is by no means an exhaustive exploration, nor is it intended to be. This Study has focused on the formalized groups, both government and community-based, that provide programs and services to the agricultural community in the Township.

Based on the analysis completed for this Study, the components of the Township of Langley's agricultural system identified above comprise a comprehensive and complex system. Each agency occupies a niche of sorts, offering resources and services that support specific needs within the agricultural industry and community, but also requiring financial and human resources of their own to operate.

The input gathered during the community engagement events for this Study were key to articulating the preliminary unmet needs – or areas for improvement – within the agricultural community of Langley. In turn, analysis of the roles played by the multiple participants of the community can help these organizations and agencies maximize their contribution. Lastly, incorporating the principles of resilience into the gap analysis helps to not only recognize the importance and need for contingency and overlap in the agricultural system, but also where areas of this system may currently be only partially met, and could be vulnerable.

Through this review, the following gaps in Langley's agricultural supports were preliminarily identified:

- 1) Enhanced representation of and advocacy for Langley farmers, to relevant governmental agencies including, but not limited to:
  - Township of Langley Council, and its Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee;
  - Metro Vancouver Regional District, and its Agricultural Advisory Committee;
  - The BC Ministry of Agriculture and local Members of the Legislative Assembly;
  - The BC Agricultural Land Commission; and
  - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and local Members of Parliament
- 2) Enhanced representation of and advocacy for Langley farmers to other relevant agencies, including maximizing opportunities for partnership, such as:
  - Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce;
  - Tourism Langley;
  - The Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver;
  - Post-secondary institutions.
- 3) Improved accessibility and shared understanding of the Township of Langley policy framework – plans, strategies, bylaws, policies, and regulations – as it pertains to agriculture and agriculture land use. Improved accessibility of knowledgeable staff, such as through the Township of Langley Agricultural Planner, to navigate these.
  - Enhanced awareness among Township of Langley staff regarding normal farm



practices and how existing Township policies may affect farmers.

- 4) Connectivity and partnerships between organizations serving agriculture in Langley, as well as between these and relevant Township of Langley Departments and Council-appointed groups and committees.
- 5) Enhanced engagement with active farmers as part of public consultation efforts by Township of Langley Council and staff. More specifically, this public consultation could take the form of:
  - Participation of Langley farmers in the development of Township of Langley bylaws, policies and strategies that affect agriculture (particularly those that require approval by the Minister of Agriculture).
  - Review by farmers and agricultural industry members, of applications to government agencies (including the Township of Langley and the Agricultural Land Commission) regarding proposed agricultural land use changes such as Agricultural Land Reserve exclusions or non-farm use.
- 6) Cross-commodity collaboration and coordination between farmers, particularly on issues affecting a large number of farmers, or agriculture generally, within the boundaries of the Township of Langley.
- 7) Expanded programming, farmer engagement, and promotion to support small-scale farming on small- and medium-sized agricultural lots, such as through the Langley Small Farm Network.
- 8) Expanded funding for projects and programs that promote sustainable agriculture in the Township of Langley including, for example, scholarships for agricultural studies, grants recognizing new and innovative farmers, funding for farmers' markets, funding for public education campaigns, and grants for improved environmental practices (as exemplified by the Delta Agricultural Society, or the Abbotsford Community Foundation's Agricultural Enhancement Grants). The sources of these funds need not be exclusively the Township of Langley, although this could include funds budgeted in the AVS for initiatives that are recommended to be implemented by third parties.
  - Management of these funds by a trusted, neutral agency. An agency with charitable status would have the greatest opportunity to leverage these funds.
- 9) Enhanced community education on normal farm practices that residents can expect to encounter in Langley, particularly for new rural residents as well as nearby residents in the urban areas.
- 10) Continued and expanded promotion of local purchasing of Langley agricultural products.
- 11) Further implementation of the Agricultural Viability Strategy, as well as other strategies and plans, such as the Township of Langley Food System Study prepared by the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

## MODELS OF FARM ORGANIZATIONS

The gaps identified above in Langley's agricultural community might be addressed by several possible models of organizations that currently serve farmers in British Columbia. This section reviews potential models across BC that contribute to agricultural communities by accomplishing a two-fold task, both serving farmers and working with local governments. Four general models were assessed: advisory committees, private services, non-profit societies, and farmers' institutes.

As many different organizations and agencies with agricultural programming or mandates already exist in Langley, including a new Farmers' Institute, rather than recommend a model for a new organization, the goal of this review is to identify the ways that the existing agencies active in Langley's agricultural system can maximize their roles in order to fill the gaps identified above, and coordinate to contribute to the sustainability of Langley's agricultural sector. Results can be found in the Conclusion.

### Council Advisory Committee

An Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) is a common feature in municipal and regional governments, with membership appointed by Councils (sometimes on referral by other agencies) from among members of the industry within its community. Approximately 45 communities in BC have an AAC, which are intended to give an opportunity for knowledgeable members of the public to be involved in municipal matters. As the provincial website dedicated to AACs describes, "A key asset is that members are predominantly drawn from the farm and ranching community and the committee focuses on agricultural issues."<sup>36</sup>

Membership of an AAC is usually defined in its Terms of Reference, for example stipulating a number of farmers, and even defining a "farmer". AACs are often chaired or co-chaired by councillors, and meetings are generally open to the public. The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the ALC offer their staff as technical resources, including with availability to attend meetings, and the MoA offers tools and an in-person workshop for AAC members every two years.

However, the reach of an AAC is limited. Their decision-making authority and mandate are set by the municipal Council, their input is considered advisory only, and recommendations must be endorsed by Council to become effective. Topics for review by an AAC may include:

- "proposed bylaws, official community plans and rezoning applications"
- "applications under the Agricultural Land Commission Act"
- "water supply and drainage issues"
- "insect and weed control programs"
- "other land use proposals that impact agriculture."

Their duties may include to:

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/agricultural-advisory-committees>

- “Steer agricultural studies”
- “Assist with the implementation of the plans for the agriculture and food sectors”
- “Assist with the development of agricultural edge policies”
- “Steer studies and reports on farm infrastructure needs”
- “Propose local government policies related to farming.”<sup>37</sup>

An Agricultural Advisory Committee, as recommended by the AVS and endorsed by the Ministry of Agriculture, offers enormous potential to provide an agricultural perspective on a wide range of matters under consideration by municipal Councils and staff. An AAC that is engaged by Council and staff for important input attracts farmers who have valuable contributions on those matters. Municipal AACs benefit from cross-membership with regional AACs and other important agricultural organizations in the community, such as Farmers’ Institutes and commodity associations. They also benefit from non-voting advisory participation from representatives of the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Land Commission.

However, as committees appointed and funded by Council, AACs cannot lobby any level of government. They can act as an excellent liaison with an industry, though, and can help maintain positive relationships between a municipality and the agricultural community. AACs are not easily able to initiate their own programming in response to identified needs, but they can advocate for such programming to appropriate agencies.

As discussed above, the Township of Langley has had a combined agricultural and economic advisory committee – the Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee (AAEEC) – for approximately the last five years. Some consideration could be given as to the effectiveness of this committee format and whether the reinstatement of a standalone AAC has merit and is warranted. However, a detailed review is outside the scope of this Study.

Review of three examples of Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) are given in the Appendix under “Case Studies”, including the Metro Vancouver AAC, the Delta AAC, and the Surrey Agriculture and Food Policy Advisory Committee.

### **Private Services**

An alternative organizational model midway between an AAC (above) and a non-profit structure (following) is that of a service administered privately by a non-profit society or a private company on contract to a government agency or other funder. The mandate of such a service is determined by the funder-contractor, typically in response to an identified community need. The contract defines the parameters of the project, such as the degree of community consultation required, the deliverables, the budget, and the lifespan of the project.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/agricultural-advisory-committees>

Review of two private services managing active agricultural programming are provided in the appendix, under “Case Studies”, including the Langley Small Farm Network itself (operated by a non-profit society), and the Kootenay and Boundary Farm Advisors (operated by a private consulting company).

Private services, while an effective means of accomplishing a given task, experience the challenge of gauging community need to define their directives. The two programs reviewed for this report overcame this by actively gathering input from key stakeholders in the community – including agricultural professionals, Ministry of Agriculture Regional Agrologists, and post-secondary institutions. These relationships have also been essential to gain legitimacy for the programs.

However, long-term these two example programs are both reconsidering their scope as well as their funding options. Private services may be made financially self-sustaining using fee-for-service models, if the community can afford it ; non-profits can do the same, while also having a greater access to resources through their ability to fundraise and apply for grants. The best potential for private services for the agricultural community therefore seems to be in contract to offer programming that exceeds existing non-profit staff or volunteer capacity.



**THE LANGLEY  
SMALL  
FARM  
NETWORK**

### Non-Profit Organizations

Examples of non-profit organizations serving agriculture in BC include the many agricultural societies, as well as Slow Food chapters, food policy councils, and many (though not all) farmers' markets. Granting foundations, such as the Delta Agricultural Society and the Abbotsford Community Foundation, are societies that themselves fund other organizations and community resources.

Review of three non-profit organizations can be found in the Appendix under “Case Studies”, including the Delta Agricultural society, Kootenay Local Agricultural Society, and Abbotsford Community Foundation, particularly the latter's Agricultural Enhancement Grants Program.

Non-profit organizations are so broad in mandate as to be adaptable to nearly any need – including educational services, fundraising, liaising between government and farmers, or supporting stewardship practices. They are able to build trust in a community often tinged with suspicion of governmental involvement, and their grassroots nature is an excellent model for engaging passionate community members. Foundations that are able to reliably access significant funds can do a great service to the agricultural community by administering funds to address specific needs identified by engaged directors. However, non-profits almost always lack consistent funding themselves, often rely on volunteers, and commonly risk spreading themselves thin with too broad of a mandate.



## Farmers' Institutes

Because a Farmers' Institute is the model recommended by the Township's Agricultural Viability Strategy, likely the least familiar model, and also the format of the newest – and therefore potentially most malleable – agricultural organization to be formed in Langley, this report gives particular attention to its review.

Farmers' Institutes are a unique alternative model to non-profit societies, as they are incorporated under a different provincial act, the BC Farmers and Womens Institutes (FWI) Act. The Act defines them as “rural organizations” that “are cross-commodity in nature and are concerned with most aspects of the farming industry and society from a community agriculture perspective.”<sup>38</sup>

Farmers' Institutes report annually to the Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes, a Ministry of Agriculture staff member appointed by the Minister of Agriculture. Otherwise, they operate in substantially the same way as other non-profit societies with a constitution and bylaws, a paying membership, a board of directors, and an annual general meeting. Farmers' Institutes are treated as equivalent to non-profits incorporated under the Societies Act, so far as funding and other opportunities are concerned.



*The province recently launched a new website to make Farmers' Institutes more accessible, at <https://bcfarmersinstitutes.ca/>*

However, the FWI Act gives Farmers' Institutes particular responsibilities and rights. Their constitutions must include at least one of the following:

- To improve conditions of rural life so that settlement may be permanent and prosperous;
- To promote the theory and practice of agriculture;
- To arrange on behalf of its members for the purchase, distribution or sale of commodities, supplies or products;
- To act generally on behalf of its members in all matters incidental to agricultural pursuits;
- To promote home economics, public health, child welfare, education and better schools.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> “Farmers and Womens Institutes,” <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/farmers-and-womens-institutes>

<sup>39</sup> Farmers and Womens Institutes Act, Section 3 (Incorporation and objects of an institute).

There were over 200 Farmers' Institutes at their peak in BC, while just about 40 are still in operation today with about 1400 members combined. However, in 2018 the Minister of Agriculture called the first ever provincial conference of BC Farmers' Institutes, repeated in 2019 along with a commitment to hold this event annually. The Ministry has also recently developed an online directory of Institutes in BC, making contact information for each much more accessible. This renewed interest in and support for the Farmers' Institute model bodes well for their future; the more the Ministry of Agriculture engages with them, the more they are empowered, and the more interest they will garner from the agricultural community.

Active Institutes often meet monthly except in the busiest months (for example, July, August and December), although the general membership only meet two or three times while boards of directors or committees make up the difference. Membership can be limited through bylaws, such as to farmers only, although some institutes alternatively have non-voting memberships for non-farmers.

Annual membership fees vary widely up to \$100 but are commonly between \$20 and \$30. Many Institutes welcome non-members to attend educational events for a small fee. No Institutes seem to receive ongoing municipal funding, and there is no indication of interest from the MoA to fund them generally, although they are eligible, like any non-profit, to apply for existing funding opportunities from the MoA and other agencies.

The geographic scope of an Institute does not have to be municipal (many cross municipal boundaries, and some even overlap with each other), but its geographic scope must be defined in its constitution. District Farmers' Institutes are also encouraged, with boundaries defined by the MoA and membership consisting of delegates from each "local" Institute in a larger region. These District Institutes were intended to then each send a delegate to form an "Advisory Board" that would meet directly with the Minister of Agriculture to advise on matters of their district's interest.

However, as participation in Farmers' Institutes declined between the early and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, only one District Institute remains active (discussed below). The Fraser Valley is technically District F, but this District Institute is not currently active, and the provincial advisory board is now defunct. Past attempts to participate on the BC Agriculture Council notwithstanding, Farmers' Institutes have instead embraced their entitlement to direct contact with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Generally, according to the Institutes interviewed, government bodies appreciate working with them as they are able to represent agriculture as a whole, rather than with individual farmers or commodity-specific associations. With their legislated recognition, combined with renewed engagement from the Minister of Agriculture, Farmers' Institutes enjoy growing recognition from their local, regional and provincial governments.

As part of this Study, five existing Farmers' Institutes were interviewed and the records of an additional six were reviewed, to give a broad overview of the characteristics and particularly the successes of Farmers' Institutes across BC.

#### *Case Study: Windermere Farmers' Institute*

This Institute, located in the East Kootenays, was founded in 1914 and continues to develop new opportunities to actively support its members. One of its primary projects is the management of a 20-acre fairground granted to it on dissolution of an agricultural society, on which it has built and leases

out an abattoir that is mandated to meet the local need (which is less than full-time). It also leases out a building to a private agricultural supply business and hosts a regular farmers' market by contract with a private operator on this land. These projects help this relatively remote community maintain access to essential resources and markets.

An additional key project is BC's first payment for ecological services initiative, on which the Langley ESI project is modeled. The current success of the program there, now funded by a municipal tax, was built on ten years of community engagement spearheaded by Dave Zehnder, an Institute director.

The Windermere Institute has a bare-bones board of only four directors, and a relatively small but growing membership of about 35, with separate membership types for farmers and non-voting non-farmers (seen as an opportunity to engage the non-farming community), both for \$25 annually. The Institute meets monthly with educational and industry guest speakers. As there is a large proportion of cattle ranchers in the area, the Institute maintains a close relationship with the BC Cattlemen's Association, and cattle-raising members are required to also purchase a membership with the BCCA. Besides the nominal income from leases, this Institute's capital-intensive projects have been funded by both provincial grants and private funding.

The Windermere Farmers' Institute conducts advocacy work, and maintains connections with its municipality, regional district, tourism board, invasive species council, the Kootenay & Boundary Farm Advisors (described elsewhere in this Study), and Columbia Valley Food and Farm, a new non-profit formed from the local Slow Food chapter to support agriculture, food processing, and culinary culture. This Institute seems to rely heavily on the volunteer contributions of retired farmers, without whose extensive effort the above impressive project list certainly wouldn't be possible.

#### *Case Study: Mid-Island Farmers' Institute*

This Institute was arguably the first of the "revival" of Farmers' Institutes that has started over the last few years. Founded in 2016, it has a regional scope that actually heavily overlaps with the pre-existing Comox Valley Farmers' Institute, which has a strong commodity membership. By contrast, the members of the Mid-Island Institute are primarily small-scale mixed-commodity farmers, and it has an education and extension focus, with monthly workshops and presentations that are free for members and nominal for non-members.

This Institute has been active in its community, particularly engaging with local schools to develop educational gardens with assistance from government and business grants. It is also politically active, advocating on behalf of small-scale farmers to the regional district and municipalities within its bounds, as well as taking the initiative to present to the provincial Ministry of Agriculture.

Interestingly, this Institute actively engages non-farmers, including on its board of directors; its members note the importance of a solid board of directors regardless of farm status. The Institute has about 60 members, and the annual fee is \$20. The Institute also funds committees that serve specialized needs, such as sheep producers or the farmers in more remote communities.



#### *Case Study: Southern Sunshine Coast Farmers' Institute*

This Institute is even younger than the Mid-Island, having been incorporated in 2018. Like Mid-Island, it has a small farm focus, due to the geography of the region, with most farms between five and ten acres. Education and advocacy are also its primary focus, but it coalesced around bulk purchasing, a constitutional item endorsed by the FWI Act but not often utilized today; however, the Sunshine Coast experiences high prices and limited selection for feed, due to its ferry-only access. The Institute is also exploring marketing opportunities for its members.

This Institute is directed by a board of five, with a larger membership of about 90. Approximately a quarter of these are non-farmers. Its monthly meetings (up to nine per year) always

feature a guest speaker on topics requested by the membership. The directors have expressed regrets at being limited by volunteer capacity and are actively seeking fundraising opportunities to expand the Institute's scope. They have valued opportunities to vet new directors and have found it essential to develop a very strong core group to maintain momentum.

#### *Case Study: Delta Farmers' Institute*

The Delta Institute, by contrast, is arguably the most established, respected and influential of all the Farmers' Institutes in BC. Established in 1898, its primary focus today is political advocacy – a necessary response to the high development pressures in this municipality, including a port and even the construction of new transportation corridors. Recently the Institute created a public education campaign, and also has ongoing field projects such as a climate action initiative, with funding variously from the province, the federal government, BC Investment Agriculture Foundation, and other sources.

In spite of a membership of about 80 farmers (mostly very established blueberry, potato and feed-corn producers), the majority of the work is shared between the board of directors and a contracted administrative staff person – the only one this Study identified in BC. This role is made possible in part by a relatively high annual membership fee of \$100 and an annual fundraiser dinner and dance, but primarily by funding from the Delta Agricultural Society. This Institute finds this position allows the directors to focus on decision-making, leaving the staff member to conduct the administrative tasks of drafting letters and working with local government to ensure that farming in Delta is considered in municipal planning and policy-development.

In fact, this Institute considers itself a “victim of its own success”, having established itself firmly as the “go-to” body for municipal, regional and even provincial governments. Members have a strong presence in the community, and the Institute focuses the majority of its advocacy work on its municipal government. The City of Delta often initiates contact and meets frequently with the board. The Institute maintains representation on the Delta Agricultural Advisory Committee, as well as on the Metro Vancouver AAC. Directors are also well-represented on the boards of their respective commodity associations.



There appears to be a very high degree of cohesion within this Institute, as well as a high degree of engagement across the agricultural agencies of Delta; in addition to the above, the Institute maintains representation on the boards of the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust, and the Delta Agricultural Society. The Institute distinguishes itself from these other organizations by a mandate to organize and represent farmers.

Interestingly, the Delta Farmers' Institute is actually incorporated under the Societies Act rather than the Farmers and Womens Institutes Act. It is believed this may originally have allowed the organization greater autonomy, flexibility in its mandate, or access to loans, but there does not seem to be any difference caused by it today, and the Ministry of Agriculture recognizes it alongside all other Farmers' Institutes.

### *Case Study: District A Farmers' Institute*

This is the only fully active District institute remaining in BC, encompassing the entirety of Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and, recently, the Sunshine Coast. Its membership is composed of 18 "local" farmers' institutes – more than a third of all the active Institutes in BC – and their survival may well be due to the parallel survival of the District A institute. District A is keenly aware of its rights of access to the Minister and Ministry of Agriculture, and it appreciates the historical broader mandate, which includes issues of public health and education (see constitutional list required by the FWI Act, above), as a mandate to advocate for the broader needs of rural communities.

The District A Farmers' Institute only meets annually but communicates with its delegate-members regularly on matters that pertain to agriculture across the island or across BC, as they did regarding the Agricultural Land Commission's recent community engagement. They occasionally write position letters to various agencies, while not discouraging their member Institutes from writing their own. It is the responsibility of the delegate-members to liaise between District A and the local Institutes.

The District A Farmers' Institute is intentionally inclusive of backyard and hobby farmers (which they refer to as "community farmers"), and one of their priorities is outreach to new and young entrants. They advised that the direction of an Institute is shaped by its membership and by its executive committee. This Institute uses standing committees of four to five from its general membership to engage more members on projects.

### *Other Institutes*

Other Institutes with notable traits include:

- The **Coombs Farmers' Institute**, a regional Institute that focuses on public engagement and education through teaching gardens, food preservation workshops, a "food-growing school", scholarships, and in-school programs that also create income streams for farmers. Its board overlaps with those of the local farmers' market and the agricultural fair. It owns a hall and organizes an annual agricultural auction as a fundraiser. With 90 members and 10 directors, it only has two general meetings annually, but hosts regular workshops and other events, and forms committees from the general membership that meet more frequently to focus on specific projects. It has received funding for projects from its regional district, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other

provincial ministries. It is active in advocacy, and a director sits on the regional district AAC.

- With no large-scale agriculture in its domain, the **Pender Islands Farmers' Institute** is committed to meeting annually with the provincial, regional and municipal governments in support of small-scale agriculture. It operates a BCAFm farmers' market, at which members are eligible to sell their products. It offers mentorships to assist with transfer of knowledge about animal husbandry, machinery maintenance, etc.
- The **Powell River Farm and Agricultural Institute** is an amalgamation of the Powell River and District Agricultural Society, and the Powell River Farmers' Institute in 2017. It meets monthly and has a board of nine directors. It operates a farmers' market and plans an annual fair and seed swap. It also maintains a seed library, coordinates bulk purchasing, offers a scholarship, and hosts online resources such as local soil data and links to research and resources.
- **Cowichan Agricultural Society and Farmers' Institute** is an amalgamation of the Cowichan Agricultural Society (possibly the oldest agricultural society in BC, established in 1868), and the Cowichan Farmers' Institute – one of three Farmers' Institutes in the Cowichan area. It is active in advocating for agriculture, with a seat on the local AAC and a presence on commodity associations. It has a history of developing resources, such as a publication, an artificial insemination program, and administration of the Crop Protection Fencing program. It owns a hall, meets monthly, and promotes its members through online farm profiles.
- Farmers' Institutes in some communities are suffering from declining membership and engagement. However, farmers and community members in both Kamloops and Mission are investigating the viability of new Farmers' Institute in their communities, and Surrey is considering reviving its currently defunct Institute.

## Summary

Farmers' Institutes can serve a wide range of functions according to their communities' needs, including farmer education, public education, and the provision of farm services. They successfully advocate for farming to their local, regional, and even provincial governments, and variously in other aspects of their communities. They can help to cross-pollinate agricultural advisory committees, tourism boards, and other agencies that can serve agriculture and benefit from an agricultural perspective.

The primary weakness of Farmers' Institutes, as with non-profits, is in a dependence on volunteer governance and management, which can cause burnout particularly when an organization spreads itself thin. Careful leadership and strategic planning are needed to keep Institutes focused. Naturally, funding for staff significantly lightens the load on volunteers, although some Institutes say they prefer to be volunteer-run. Either way, outside funding is required for the implementation of most programs, and a close relationship with a funding agency is ideal for reducing the work necessary to maintain programming.

Like non-profits, Farmers' Institutes seem to be most successful when they maintain specific projects that are relevant to their communities, and also those that have networks of other organizations engaging with them in their communities. Some Institutes embrace their role on the frontline between farms and urbanization. The most successful maintain this position with support from their municipality through an Agricultural Advisory Committee, potentially as well as local agricultural foundations.

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the models studied above – advisory committees, private services, non-profit organizations and Farmers' Institutes – offers different opportunities and benefits to agricultural communities. None is a solution to all the issues an agricultural community might face; rather, the niches of services and needs within the agricultural system are met variously by different models in different circumstances. The question is not which organizations to endorse, but how each might find its place to contribute to a resilient community.

According to the BC-based Centre for Community Enterprise, in resilient communities it is essential that “citizens have avenues open to them to express their opinions in a productive and positive manner. Community leaders work to encourage participation ... and use this input as a guide for their decisions.”<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, it is of key importance to community resilience that all four models – Farmers' Institutes, AACs, non-profit organizations, and the steering committees of private services – offer opportunities for farmers to engage constructively with the issues of their community. This is the first step to meeting many of the needs identified for the Langley agricultural community above.

However, direct opportunities for farmers to influence decision making are best provided by Farmers' Institutes and Agricultural Advisory Committees, which are expressly designed for this purpose.

An AAC has the potential to be the agricultural “think tank” of a community, bringing together members of the agricultural community (not exclusively farmers themselves) who are experienced and/or innovative problem solvers, providing diverse and valuable agricultural viewpoints on questions that exceed the experience of municipal Council or staff.

But as independent organizations with a wider membership base, Farmers' Institutes further provide an opportunity for all farmers to engage directly with the problems they experience, and with the people with the authority to affect them, so that “Local issues are owned by the community and people take it upon themselves to do something about them.”<sup>41</sup> This kind of unmitigated engagement is sometimes difficult to find in rural communities.

Non-profits, being flexible in mandate and readily responsive to grassroots needs, are well-positioned to fill additional gaps, provided that funding can be obtained. However, needs that a community has identified, but a non-profit or Farmers' Institute lacks funds to fulfill, may be well-served by a fee-for-service arrangement with a private service.

Finally, cross-pollination between all the above players is essential. AACs are well served if their membership includes representatives from the local Farmers' Institute; non-profits and Farmers' Institutes might duplicate efforts if they are not communicating; and private services benefit from advisory input from the others. Therefore, as in all cases here, coordination and the maintenance of partnerships are indeed of utmost importance. Together these accomplish “a multi-functional approach to create a sustainable development system.”<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p14

<sup>41</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p14

<sup>42</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p7

### Preliminary Contributions for Consideration

The primary goal of this Study is to analyze the relationships between the local agencies that influence farming in the Township of Langley, and specifically explore the potential role of the newly formed Langley Farmers' Institute.

In conducting this Study to determine the merits of establishing a local farm organization, LEPS approached the agricultural sector in Langley as a dynamic system, consisting of multiple interacting participants including institutions, government agencies, private businesses, decision-makers, community-based organizations, and farmers, all of whom influence the character of this system and play a role in supporting the functions of the farmers and the farming community at the centre. Understanding this system in terms of its component parts, or the 'participants', involves identifying the key contributions participants make or could be making, and where changes to the roles of these participants could promote "a resilient farm sector" in the Township of Langley.

Based on the analysis conducted for this Study, including identification of the participants in the Township of Langley's agricultural community and the contributions of these participants, this Study provides preliminary proposals for a cohesive set of relationships to build resilience in this system, the 'beginnings' of a fine-tuned model for consideration and more in-depth analysis.

Figure 3 identifies possible opportunities for the various participants in this system to contribute, as well as enhance effective collaboration and support of a vibrant agricultural industry and community over time. This chart reflects the organization-level opportunities to resolve the gaps identified in this Study, but does not reflect the myriad of individuals who have varying degrees of interest and investment that are also part of the agricultural system.

**FIGURE 3 – Preliminary Contributions for Consideration**

<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Potential Primary Contributor</b>	<b>Potential Secondary or Supportive Contributor(s)</b>
1. Representation of farmers to government agencies	Farmers' Institute	AAEEC
2. Representation of farmers in partnerships with other bodies	Farmers' Institute	Non-profits
3. Improved accessibility of Township bylaws, knowledgeable staff	Township of Langley	AAEEC
4. Connecting organizations with each other and with Township	AAEEC	Non-profits, Farmers' Institute, Township of Langley
5. Farmers directly participating in consultation with Township	AAEEC	Farmers' Institute, non-profits
6. Cross-commodity collaboration between farmers	Farmers' Institute	AAEEC



7. Promotion of farming small lots	Farmers' Institute	Private services, Township of Langley, non-profits
8. Management of funding for innovative and sustainable agriculture	Non-profits	Township of Langley, Farmers' Institute
9. Education to residents unfamiliar with normal farm practices	Township of Langley	AAEEC, Farmers' Institute
10. Promotion of Langley products	Non-profits	Private services, Farmers' Institute, non-profits, Township of Langley
11. Implementation of AVS with farmer oversight	Township of Langley	AAEEC, Farmers' Institute

### Recommendations

There are several recommendations that have emerged from this Study, made to both the Township of Langley and to the Langley Farmers' Institute, as these are the assumed primary audiences of this document. The purpose of these recommendations is to maximize the roles of these two contributors of the Langley agricultural community. However, recognizing that the relationships between the agencies that support Langley's agricultural community are comprehensive and complex, the contents of this Study are relevant to all contributors. This recognition reinforces the need for escalating coordination and collaboration with all the participants in the system discussed in this Study.

Some gaps, or barriers to the sustainability of the agricultural system in the Township of Langley, are beyond the capacity of the Langley Farmers' Institute to address. Figure 3 above offers additional possible steps that could complement the formal recommendations below. Figure 4 on the follow page provides a summary of this Study's recommendations.

FIGURE 4 - Recommendations

Recommendations	Justification from Township Documents
<p><b>1. The Township of Langley</b> (the “Township”) recognizes the Langley Farmers’ Institute as a body that represents Langley farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Township refers to the Institute to disseminate information of relevance to farmers</li> <li>b. The Township will engage the Institute as a means to consult with farmers, where and when relevant and appropriate, and as determined by Council</li> <li>c. The Township will appoint one director of the Institute serve on the Township Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee, as determined and considered by Council</li> <li>d. The Township will afford the Institute regular opportunities, balanced with other Committee priorities, to provide updates on Institute activities, events, and projects to the Township’s Agricultural Advisory and Economic Enhancement Committee, as well as annually to Council, to maintain engagement and positive communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet AVS objectives to better represent the views of the entire Township’s farm community, ensure that farm-related issues receive attention, support partnership to enhance agricultural production (2.1.3). Provides an additional voice to encourage senior governments to protect Township farm land (2.2.2). Provides a means to accomplish all objectives that require communication with farmers (2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.1.10, 2.1.11, 2.1.12, 2.1.13, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.7, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.5, 2.4.6, 2.4.7, 2.4.8)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. The Langley Farmers’ Institute</b> performs due diligence to represent, advocate and serve Langley farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Institute will strive to provide a coordinated voice, and represent and advocate for Langley farmers’ interests</li> <li>b. The Institute will continue to pursue a cross-commodity membership, aspiring for a broad representation of Langley’s farmers</li> <li>c. The Institute will continue to offer voting memberships to current farmers only, and engage non-farmers in other ways</li> <li>d. The Institute will advocate and assist, where and as appropriate, in the implementation of the Township of Langley’s Agricultural Viability Strategy as well as the implementation of other agricultural studies, strategies and policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet Sustainability Charter commitment to “open, inclusive and consultative community involvement”; can contribute to additional goals to encourage active volunteerism, respond to community needs, recognize the rural character as an essential community feature; can help accomplish goal to establish and strengthen stewardship partnerships.</li> <li>• Provides a means to accomplish the implementation of all KPU recommendations that require communication with farmers (3.2, 4.2, 7.2, 8.2, 9.1, 10.2, 10.3)</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX

### Community Engagement

#### *Roundtable with Farmers and Regional Agrologist February 5, 2019*

The Regional Agrologists assist with municipal and regional governments in planning for agriculture. They mediate complaints about farm activities before complaints are referred to the Farmer Review Board. And they act as a point of contact for answering or directing questions and connecting different levels of government or different agencies, etc.

Farmers indicated that there is a lack of small, diversified farm representation to the province, and that this would best be represented by an organization. Perhaps this representation needs to happen on the BC Agriculture Council. Small-scale meat producers are having a particularly difficult time, as the already-limited processing options are phasing out custom cutting. This could close the entire small-scale meat industry – or push its processing underground. Appropriate facilities might be on industrial land, or site-specific small facilities on ALR.

#### *Social Sustainability Strategy community consultation event May 14, 2019*

Organized and facilitated by Township Social Planning staff. Attended by four current farmers, one past farmer.

ALR vs Township housing regulations conflicting/confusing, need for slaughter capacity, regulations make it difficult for farmers to function but don't catch the abusers, advised to apply or present to AAEEC with concerns, need more awareness of/accessibility to regulations, need for advocacy for farmers and coverage of farmers' issues, best practices needed for housing on farmland, Township

document for secondary housing and "bona fide" farm status blamed on ALC but ALC says municipalities get to define these, need to investigate how Township does or does not comply with ALC regulations as well as farmers' rights (and compare with other municipalities), need best practices, generally need access to information.

#### *Langley Small Farm Network communications February – November, 2019*

From the Langley Small Farm Network final report to the BC Investment Agriculture Foundation, 2019:

Our hope was to support small-scale farmers in developing more cost-effective operations, access markets, and reduce environmental impact. To determine how best to achieve these, we circulated an online questionnaire, and followed up with more specific questions to help us refine our understanding of the needs. We also regularly posed "polls" on social media to garner input on logistical questions.

Overall, we received 136 responses to these opportunities for input across our platforms, providing essential information to guide our programming.

These responses informed our programming, as they indicated, from highest priority: a desire to connect with farmers in similar situations (meetings or events at least monthly from October to May); a need for representation to government bodies; and help navigating regulations (particularly ALR and property tax regulations). In second priority, these farmers requested advice on: water management (both shortages and flooding); processing and value-added opportunities (right from exploration of ideas to packaging); and basic production information (common practices and disease/pest management, plus specialty opportunities).

Across the course of seven events, our programming included six Langley “roundtable” events, where attendees heard from a professional and had the opportunity to ask and discuss the unique issues they face on their farms; four small-farm tours from industry leaders within 15 minutes of Langley; and two panel events featuring ten Langley farmers. Through collaborations with six agricultural organizations we were also able to offer seven larger (half- to full-day) events.

All feedback on the program has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, respondents indicated that the primary recommendation they would make for the Langley Small Farm Network would be to reduce the number of solo-hosted events and instead focus on partnering with other organizations on their events and continuing to communicate existing opportunities. However, as the participants take over management of the program, we anticipate the further development of additional projects whose seeds were planted over the course of this program.

#### *Community Engagement Event October 27, 2019*

Promoted through press release, social media, word-of-mouth, and through commodity associations

Contacted: BC Blueberry Council, BC Cranberry Growers Association, BC Greenhouse Growers Association (responded and forwarded), BC Landscape & Nursery Association (responded and included in weekly provincial newsletter, including to about 15 growers in Langley and 35 non-grower members), BC Broiler & Hatching Eggs Producers Association, BC Chicken Growers Association, BC Egg Producers’

Association, Horse Council BC (responded and forwarded), BC Cattlemen’s Association (responded and forwarded to three producers in Langley), Lower Mainland Sheep Producers Association (responded and forwarded to all 47 members), BC Dairy Association, BC Young Farmers, BC Goat Association

About 50 attendees representing a broad spectrum

- About: 5 new farmers, 15 who had been farming 1-5 years, 20 farming 10-15+ years
- About 15 multi-generational Langley farmers
- Livestock/poultry/equines – 28
- Vegetables/fruit/berries – 10
- Forage – 15
- Other (bees, etc.) – 7
- (Many produce more than one)

Attendees chose topics to discuss as groups in three rounds; in order of popularity:

ALR exclusion/non-farm-use applications (37 attendees): Attendees identified problems with existing and recent Township and provincial bylaws and legislation, as well as a need for enforcement to support legitimate farming activities. They expressed interest in giving input on applications regarding ALR land, but they were reticent to have a farmers' organization make decisions about applications.

Representing and advocating for Langley farmers to ToL, Metro Van, Ministry of Ag, etc. (23 attendees): Attendees expressed a desire for a stronger voice for farmers and farming in Langley. They identified a disconnect between farmers and government bodies, including the ToL, the MoA and the ALC. They pointed to poor communication or even understanding of bylaws by Township staff, and inconsistent use of the policy that seems to define a "*bona fide* farm"; they would like to see education for government staff about farmers' needs, and legitimate farming activities. They expressed a desire for a separate AAC and EEC, and for greater farmer representation on the AAC. They wanted to see farmers of all types and scales unite for any lobbying activities.

Offering resources for small-scale farms with mixed production/commodities (22 attendees): Participants listed the challenges facing small-scale farmers as including financing, business plan development, and veterinary supports. Lacking an association or marketing board, they experience greater challenges entering the industry or accessing information. They identified access to slaughter as a key issue. They relayed that small-scale farmers are not represented to, or supported by, Township of Langley or MoA. With so many small ALR properties in Langley, they identified potential in encouraging small-scale agriculture to increase the production on Langley ALR land.

Collective resources (ex: bulk purchasing, tool share, auction, seed library, etc.) (22 attendees): Participants identified many opportunities for shared resources to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness, including cold storage, equipment, and retail space. However, they also identified land, information, and community cohesion as additional assets. They drew a connection between this cohesion and the survival of farming as a livelihood. They identified networking and developing community buy-in as keys steps.

Communication – keeping members informed about new resources, regulations, consultations, etc. (14 attendees): Participants expressed concern about the need for accessible, quality information, particularly Langley-specific information. They identified email newsletters, websites and social media as valuable modes for sharing up-to-date information. They would like to have a point person to maintain communication – flowing in both directions – between Langley farmers, the ToL, ALC, and other government agencies. A key development would be improved access to Township regulations and other farm-related information, such as on a section of the Township website.

Promotion of Langley agricultural businesses and products (12 attendees): Participants focussed on the discord between Langley farmers and urban residents. They identified urbanization as a challenge in Langley, and a need to recognize and appreciate Langley as an agricultural community. They would like to see Township and Langley residents appreciate the functions and economic benefits of farming. They identified opportunities for Township to foster an understanding among urban residents about the realities of farming (ex: by developing signage and even multi-lingual brochures).

Professional development (4 attendees): Participants identified access to farmland as a challenge, exacerbated by low incentives for landowners to farm. In particular, they would like to see information sharing between established and new farms, such as through mentorship.



### *Focus Group*

November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and December 5<sup>th</sup>. Comprised of 11 participants:

- Multi-generational single-commodity producer
- Experienced cooperative farmer
- Multi-generational mixed producer on a very large parcel
- New small-scale producer with at least five years of experience
- New and young small-scale producer with less than five years of experience
- New and retirement-aged small-scale producer with less than five years of experience
- Medium-scale single-commodity producer
- Medium-scale mixed producer
- Farmer turned educator
- Producer processing for alcohol
- Small-scale single-commodity producer

Feedback included in summary of all comments below, to protect anonymity.

### *Summary of Comments*

Including current farmers, Township staff, Councillors, the AAEEC, and industry advisors:

- Ideas (for models, agreements, projects, etc.) can always be tested as pilots for a year, and evaluated for success
- The AAEEC can be approached to make recommendations to Council
- There is potential in Langley for agricultural cooperatives to support processing and sales
- Langley needs a body that landowners can work with to help support/ensure the land is farmed, for example when active farm use of the land is a condition of a variance given
- A goal of the Institute should be to increase farming in Langley
- The Institute should foster positive relations with the ALC, foster the ALC's respect for the Institute
- Council would want to see good representation of many and diverse farmers in the Institute
- Council could make better use of the AAEEC by referring more decisions for their input like other municipalities
- The AAEEC could engage more on agricultural issues if it had more active farmers as members
- The term "*bona fide* farmer" is not defined by the ALC, MoA, or any other government body
- The Township "Additional Dwelling – Farm Use" policy document is often interpreted as defining a "*bona fide*" farmer. Landowners are told it is based on ALC policies.
- Primary trends in Langley agriculture are: fewer horse operations, more blueberry and cranberry farms, and high interest in (if not yet development of) cannabis production
- Would not recommend that the Institute review farm land-use applications
- The Institute could, however, voluntarily comment on impact of land-use applications

- The Institute could collaborate with landowners on proposals
- The Institute should advocate for the rights and interests of Langley farmers
- LSAF's focus should be more on outreach
- Farmers' Institutes are respected for their dedicated focus on a geographically delineated community, and their ability to represent multi-stakeholder interests
- Local governments are often the ones fielding questions about how to get into agriculture, what crops to produce, etc.; Council appreciates the need to facilitate the next generation/evolution of farming there is an opportunity for research to support new farmers
- The AAEEC is currently assumed (ex: by Metro Vancouver RD) to represent agriculture in Langley
- The Institute needs to maintain a positive, constructive relationship with Township/AAEEC (a cooperative dynamic)
- The Institute can offer the opportunity for other bodies (ToL, MoA, etc.) to reach the farmers, not just vice versa
- Farmers' Institutes should be lobbyists
- The Township of Langley could fund the Langley Farmers' Institute
- However, this might obfuscate the arms-length relationship needed to allow the Institute to advocate on behalf of farmers AND the Township is wary of setting a precedent by funding an independent non-profit; better to fund through grant streams
- Municipalities benefit from AACs that represent farmers
- Municipalities benefit from staff expertise on farm legislation and regulations
- Farmers' Institutes should consider the need for agricultural infrastructure, too
- AACs should be reviewing ALR applications
- Council respects the AVS as a baseline reference for Township agricultural directives
- The Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce is willing to engage with a farmers' organization to discuss some of the policy questions they currently field
- The Institute will need support to develop a road map for its first years, after this project is done
- It would be valuable for Institute meetings to always be open to the public, so that all Langley farmers can see it as a place to bring concerns at any time
- A Farmers' Institute would be valuable as a means of communication, such as regarding ALC changes, regulations, etc.
- The Institute's focus should be on lobbying, as this is not currently offered by any of the existing agricultural organizations in Langley
- The Institute should put forward a representative for Langley for the Metro Vancouver AAC
- The Institute could work with LSAF to inform programming, such as educational topics
- The Institute could approach Township for ongoing funding, such as through an endowment
- The Township has been receptive to agricultural support concepts in the past
- The Institute should engage with commodity associations, both to connect with their members and

to help its own members connect with them

- Council will want to see the big picture proposal: anticipated positive outcomes (short, medium and long-term) and relationship to the AVS; incorporate KPU Township of Langley Food System Study
- Ministry of Agriculture regional Agrologists are eager and willing to attend Farmers' Institutes events and offer their resources
- Langley could develop an "Agriculture Day" modeled on the provincial Ag Day in Victoria, similarly offering both engagement opportunities between Langley politicians and farmers, and educational opportunities for politicians and government staff on agricultural issues and norms
- Council values hearing the economic case for any initiative
- LSAF could become more active in identifying nominees from the agricultural sector for the Langley Environmental Hero Award
- The Institute could be involved in identifying nominees from the agricultural sector for other awards, such as those awarded by the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce
- There is a need to investigate how the Township complies (or doesn't) with ALC regulations, Right to Farm, etc.
- Farmers can't access Township bylaws online, resulting in further confusion about regulations
- Important for farmers to speak with one voice
- Local governments appreciate seeing broad funding support; offers legitimacy to a project
- Potential for collaborations between LSAF, LEPS, Langley Small Farm Network, Langley Community Farmers Market; and to support each other on major issues
- Council/Township staff can help an Institute source funding if they have voted to support the viability of an Institute
- The Institute can offer education, or make recommendations on education needed
- The Institute can increase agricultural capacity, or make recommendations on how to increase agricultural capacity
- The Township currently prohibits secondary residences for agri-tourism, a barrier to income generation
- The Institute may be able to help facilitate "group" Environmental Farm Plans to help non-farming properties access the benefits of the process by pairing with active farms
- Langley's salmon-bearing streams would benefit from grassroots investment from farmers, in stewardship practices

## Case Studies

### *Agricultural Advisory Committees*

The **Metro Vancouver AAC (MV-AAC)** has a mandate in line with that recommended by the province, with the following additions: the allocation of the MVRD's "Agricultural Awareness" grants, and to "serve[] as a forum for the exchange of technical information and policy perspectives on agricultural issues in the region."<sup>43</sup>

It is comprised of members from across the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) and across commodities. Representatives must be nominated, either by a member municipality, an agricultural organization, an educational institution, or other "selected" agencies, and they serve a four-year term that coincides with municipal elections. These appointed members may not be local elected officials. Members include representatives from commodity associations and members of municipal AAC's (who may or may not be farmers themselves), but also often includes non-commodity farmers, and members of support industries such as food processing associations and post-secondary institutions. The Terms of Reference stipulate that "Agricultural Producers will generally comprise the majority of voting members of the Committee at all times. The Chair is elected from among these voting members. One MVRD Director sits on the committee on a one-year term, and several MVRD staff along with one Ministry of Agriculture staff and one ALC staff attend meetings with non-voting status."<sup>44</sup>

Meetings (typically five per year) consist of presentations from external agencies, such as the National Zero Waste Council or Young Agrarians, on agriculture-related projects or issues; and presentations from Metro Vancouver staff on proposed regional strategies, etc., followed by robust discussion. Meetings are longer than those of most AACs so that each delegate also has time to provide an update on the current events of their geographical communities and their industries. The common theme is application of a diverse lens directly from the agriculture and food industry on policies that affect farming and food production.

The mandate of the **Delta AAC** is also in line with that recommended by the province, above. Its mandate also specifically requests advice on "Agricultural drainage and irrigation issues"<sup>45</sup> – of particular concern in this low-lying municipality. The committee is composed of ten members appointed by the City of Delta Council to bring "local knowledge, expertise and experience."<sup>46</sup> However, it traditionally includes at least one "resource member" from the Delta Farmers' Institute (and another from the Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust). Matters that are referred by Delta Council to the AAC for review are often also referred to the Delta Farmers' Institute for additional feedback, and AAC meetings are occasionally attended by additional members of the Delta Farmers' Institute as members of the public.

The Delta AAC meets only three to four times per year. Matters brought to the Delta AAC include: review of Delta policies that may affect agriculture; input on requests Delta is facing for funding for

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<sup>43</sup> "Metro Vancouver Regional District Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference," <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/AAC-TermsofReference.pdf>, p1.

<sup>44</sup> "Metro Vancouver Regional District Agricultural Advisory Committee Terms of Reference," <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/AAC-TermsofReference.pdf>, p1- 2.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.delta.ca/your-government/mayor-council/committees>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.delta.ca/your-government/mayor-council/committees>

agriculture-related projects; MVRD policies that affect agriculture (aided by overlap between the membership of the Delta AAC and the MV-AAC); and Ministry of Agriculture policies and regulations. The Delta AAC often receives reports for further discussion, or requests additional information from city staff, and discussions are generally comprehensive.

Until recently, Delta also had a separate advisory committee for diking and drainage; this then became a technical staff committee that includes City of Delta staff and members of the Delta Farmers' Institute, among several other agencies; it reports to the Delta AAC and to Council.<sup>47</sup>

The **Surrey Agriculture & Food Policy Advisory Committee (AFPAC)** is the AAC-equivalent for the City of Surrey and developed from the oldest AAC in BC. In addition to the mandate recommended by the province, its purpose is “to establish liaison and maintain communication between the agricultural community and the city on agricultural and food security issues,”<sup>48</sup> contribute to improved “access to healthy, local food” for Surrey residents, promote urban food projects, and make recommendations on policies and regulations for a sustainable food system.<sup>49</sup>

The committee meets up to 11 times per year. Its 12 voting members must include five “farming representatives ... who derive[] at least 75% of [their] income from farming.” A maximum of five further members may come from “other agricultural and food sectors” – such as commodity associations, food advocacy societies or food distributors. Two councillors, appointed by the Mayor, are also voting members, one serving as the Chair. Members of other committees can be appointed as additional voting members. Non-voting members include representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Land Commission, and Surrey’s engineering and planning/development departments.<sup>50</sup>

Matters that the Surrey AFPAC has contributed to include the official community plan, the review and preparation of neighbourhood plans, endorsement of flood control strategies, promotion of agriculture viability initiatives, implementation of measures to address urban-rural conflict, promotion of agricultural best practices, preparation of the Surrey Agricultural Plan, and review of – and recommendations to Council on – subdivisions, re-zonings and development applications on land in and adjacent to the ALR.

### *Private Services*

The **Langley Small Farm Network** emerged from a proposal brought forward by the Agriculture Program Coordinator at Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS). The Coordinator developed a program proposal that was then used to write funding applications based on personal experience and personal networks in the small-scale farming community. That program has consisted of hosting networking opportunities for small-scale farmers, promoting opportunities and resources offered by

<sup>47</sup> “Delta council reduced number of committees, creates new ones,” Lakic, Surrey Now-Leader, February 8, 2019.

<sup>48</sup> “Surrey Agricultural and Food Policy Committee Terms of Reference,” [https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/DCT\\_AFPAC\\_Terms\\_of\\_Reference.pdf](https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/DCT_AFPAC_Terms_of_Reference.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> “Surrey Agricultural and Food Policy Committee Terms of Reference,” [https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/DCT\\_AFPAC\\_Terms\\_of\\_Reference.pdf](https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/DCT_AFPAC_Terms_of_Reference.pdf), p1.

<sup>50</sup> “Surrey Agricultural and Food Policy Committee Terms of Reference,” [https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/DCT\\_AFPAC\\_Terms\\_of\\_Reference.pdf](https://www.surrey.ca/bylawsandcouncilibrary/DCT_AFPAC_Terms_of_Reference.pdf), p1-2.



other organizations – both governmental and non-profit, and circulating relevant regulatory and legislative changes.

While the program has been hosted by a non-profit society, its administration was managed directly by staff with a high degree of autonomy. The advantage of this format is flexibility and responsiveness, as the program could be adapted quickly to meet identified needs.

The disadvantage of this program has been twofold. Firstly, it has relied entirely on staff administration, which, although costed at low rates compared to the private consulting industry, was still in the realm of \$15,000 per year, relying on continued funding from grants or other sources. Secondly, and relatedly, administration by hired staff meant that members of the agricultural industry were not engaged any further than as sought by the staff. While the program did seek both broad inputs, through an online questionnaire, and deep input through interviews, they found that industry members did not seem personally invested in the success of the program. Their recommendation is that the ongoing success of the program will require its ultimate transfer to the control of a board or committee of small-scale farmers, even if the day-to-day administration remains the responsibility of hired staff.

The **Kootenay & Boundary Farm Advisors (KBFA)** developed out of a need for agricultural support – extension and farm business management services – in the Kootenay region. The three Kootenay regional districts formed a steering committee, facilitated by the Columbia Basin Trust, to oversee the project. It is administrated by a private consultancy firm on contract for a three-year pilot, ending in 2020, funded equally by each of the regional districts along with the Trust.

The third-party contractor offers extension services to approximately 450 participants across the region, by “provid[ing] producers with free, technical production support and information from a network of specialized resources, including independent consultants and academics.”<sup>51</sup>

This network of “specialist advisors” includes farmers and ranchers, industry specialists, academics and staff from the BC Ministry of Agriculture. The MoA Regional Agrologists were identified as key advisory figures, and the MoA also supports some of the program’s events with speakers and provincial-federal funding. The University of British Columbia and Thompson Rivers University are also both involved as formal research partners, as well as other institutions like the Forage Foundation; these partners benefit from the facilitated access to farmers.

Accessibility has been a key goal, and all services are currently free for “agricultural producers in [the] region working towards commercial viability.”<sup>52</sup> While the program has received a large degree of interest from new entrants, the administrators chose to focus on supports for ‘serious’ farmers, appreciating that ‘serious’ new entrants also benefit.

Long-term, the project hopes to develop a steering committee of farmers to advise its direction, although it acknowledges that its current committee of agricultural professionals has made it possible for the project to establish. Unfortunately, the long-term funding of the program cannot continue to come from the regional districts, and the program administrators are evaluating sustainable options, including converting to a non-profit structure, with reduced programming funded by grants, or continuing through the consultancy company at least partially funded by fees charged for the services.

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.kbfa.ca>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.kbfa.ca/services>

Alternatively, the project could be entirely absorbed into a province-wide program administrated by the MoA, or by a post-secondary institution such as Kwantlen Polytechnic University, which is currently lobbying to do so.

### *Non-Profit Organizations*

The **Delta Agricultural Society (DAS)** is a non-profit organization, separate from the Delta Farmers' Institute but also founded over a hundred years ago in 1888. It was incorporated under the Agricultural Associations Act (which no longer seems to be in force, and the organizations incorporated under it seem since to have converted to either Farmers' Institutes, Societies, or marketing boards). Its original mandate was to encourage livestock husbandry, promote best practices in soil cultivation, and promote home economics. It was granted 24 acres of land in 1902, selling these to Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the City of Delta in the 1990's. With the proceeds, it immediately established itself as a major funding body in Delta.<sup>53</sup>

Today the DAS continues to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to community groups and projects each year. It funds multiple causes in Delta, ranging from the Delta hospital to the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust. Annually, it grants sufficient funds to the Delta Farmers' Institute to hire a half-time contracted staff person.

The **Kootenay Local Agricultural Society**, by contrast, is an active service non-profit, which has developed a marketing program based around a peer-to-peer certification. Founded in 2008, it covers the three regional districts of the Kootenays and is "dedicated to strengthening sustainable agriculture" in the Kootenays. It has expanded from a source-of-production certification program to include other resources for small-scale, diversified farms, such as a tool share catered to its members, a workshop series, and farming guides for their local conditions. The organization has expressed a dedication to financial accessibility of its resources. Like the Kootenay & Boundary Farm Advisors, their partners include the Columbia Basin Trust.

The **Abbotsford Community Foundation** is a general service foundation that began with a substantial bequest from a family to the Matsqui Parks and Recreation Commission in 1978. Within a few years it developed into an independent foundation, which has continued to receive donations from community members and fundraising non-profits. It has a current endowment of \$12 million. The foundation grants funds to diverse "charitable organizations for programs and projects in

Abbotsford," disbursing close to a million dollars annually.<sup>54</sup> The foundation established an Agricultural Enhancement Grants Program with funding from the City of Abbotsford, "for the purpose of supporting the agricultural industry in Abbotsford" to "encourage agricultural innovation; increase agricultural productivity; build capacity in the agriculture sector; [and] promote sustainable agricultural practices." Allocation of this fund is determined by "a committee composed of representatives from the agriculture industry".<sup>55</sup>

The foundation chooses an area of focus for the Agricultural Enhancement Grants each year and awards up to \$50,000, or "up to half of a project's cost" to approximately three recipients. For 2020 this grant is

<sup>53</sup> "Delta Agricultural Society", Memory BC, <https://www.memorybc.ca/delta-agricultural-society>

<sup>54</sup> <https://abbotsfordcf.org/about/our-history/>

<sup>55</sup> Abbotsford Community Foundation 2020 Agricultural Enhancement Grants Program Guidelines, p1.

available to non-profit organizations in all sectors of the agriculture industry, with projects given preference if they “involve the collaboration of two or more organizations,” or that “Build capacity in the agriculture industry”;<sup>56</sup> in past years recipients have included privately-owned farms revitalizing underutilized land.

### *Rural Community Resilience through Local Farmers’ Organizations*

This appendix summarizes several recommendations from the Community Resilience Manual and the Community Development Institute (CDI) that are of particular relevance to a local community-based organization serving an agricultural community.

Its first is to begin with strategic planning: “Resilient communities take the time to research, analyze and plan for their future. The plan becomes integrated into the work of those organizations involved in community economic development.”<sup>57</sup>

As acknowledged by the Township of Langley’s Sustainability Strategy, and Agricultural Viability Strategy, as well as KPU’s Township of Langley Food System Study, it is essential that multiple and diverse players engage in the implementation of their recommendations, as the key to resilient communities is often in this diversity – and even slight redundancy – of resources.

### *Partnerships*

What Langley’s agricultural community can aim for is “a critical mass of co-operating organizations through which locally based initiatives are implemented and evaluated.”<sup>58</sup> These partnerships are key for pooling resources to tackle bigger problems, while offering opportunities for cross-collaboration and even lending legitimacy to each organization.

The Community Development Institute (CDI) at the University of Northern BC notes that threats to community partnerships include protectionism – especially when non-profits are competing for the same funding sources – as well as uneven commitments between partners, but also simply the time and energy required to maintain these relationships.<sup>59</sup>

Instead, these organizations must “have a widely shared vision for their future, involve key sectors in the implementation of the goals, and measure results on a regular basis.”<sup>60</sup> Laterally, organizations need to coordinate “partnerships and collaborative working relationships,” which “result in efficient use of limited resources and more effective and creative effort toward accomplishing the common goals.”<sup>61</sup>

This type of collaboration is what allows the Delta Farmers’ Institute, the Delta Agricultural Society, the Delta Agricultural Advisory Committee, and the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust to support each other in a strong and broadly-serving network. On the regional scale, the same can be said of the

<sup>56</sup> Abbotsford Community Foundation 2020 Agricultural Enhancement Grants Program Guidelines, p2.

<sup>57</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p12.

<sup>58</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p8.

<sup>59</sup> “Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places: Executive Summary Report,” Community Development Institute, University of Northern BC (2006), p9.

<sup>60</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p12.

<sup>61</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p15.

relationships between the Kootenay & Boundary Farm Advisors, Kootenay Local Agricultural Society, and Columbia Basin Trust, as well as local Farmers' Institutes such as that in Windermere. The CDI report notes that these relationships truly come to fruition in times of need.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, to contribute to a resilient community an organization must look “outside itself to seek and secure resources that will address areas of identified weakness. In resilient communities, optimal use of local resources and skills is balanced by careful use of the external resources and information required to address local gaps and accomplish local goals.”<sup>63</sup> The Farmers' Institutes on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands manage programs particular to their communities, engage with their local AACs, and are supported and encouraged by the District A Farmers' Institute and, through it, connection to other Institutes.

In Langley, this means the agricultural community must maintain positive relationships with larger agencies including the Metro Vancouver Regional District (and its AAC), the BC Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Land Commission, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as well as non-governmental organizations like nearby Farmers' Institutes, commodity associations and the BC Agriculture Council, and tangentially-related agencies such as post-secondary institutions, the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce, or the Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver.

### *Leadership*

The CDI report also advises that a successful rural community organization needs a leadership that facilitates a common vision and builds community commitment while remaining accountable. Leadership must offer stability, act as an ongoing source of information and support, and build relationships with other organizations within the community – such as leaders from local government, business/industry and other service providers, including from beyond the immediate community. For Langley, this means strong representation of farmers in key positions, such as the boards of non-profits/Farmers' Institutes and advisory committees, supplemented by other respected members of the farming industry, such as retired farmers, commodity association representatives, agricultural journalists, academics, Agrologists and other consultants.

### *Engagement*

“In resilient communities, people perceive that the future of the community is in their hands. ... [P]eople seek out and use productively the skills, expertise and finance available in the community to address issues and problems that are important to the citizens.”<sup>64</sup> Within an organization, it is citizens themselves who “undertake or influence” the action.<sup>65</sup> The CDI identifies voluntary organizations as “focal points for citizens to engage”, generating trust and mobilizing “social capital”.<sup>66</sup> As farmer-based organizations that relate to governmental and other institutions, Farmers' Institutes are a model that is particularly well suited for engaging active members of the agricultural community to develop this

<sup>62</sup> “Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places: Executive Summary Report,” Community Development Institute, University of Northern BC (2006), p9.

<sup>63</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p16.

<sup>64</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p15.

<sup>65</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p15.

<sup>66</sup> “Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places: Executive Summary Report,” Community Development Institute, University of Northern BC (2006), p3.

“social capital” – relationships of trust between individuals and institutions that can be mobilized to help communities respond to social and economic change.<sup>67</sup>

However, the CDI warns that dependence on volunteers, especially concentrated in a limited number of positions, risks the organization’s ability to absorb stress and change, and therefore risks its long-term stability.<sup>68</sup> The Langley Sustainable Agriculture Foundation has risked this, with a wide mandate that lately has encompassed three large projects in spite of an all-volunteer force. To mitigate this risk, voluntary organizations can limit their mandate to what is manageable by volunteer labour alone, or they can hire staff to implement specific projects. However, this raises the question of funding, which, for Langley’s agricultural community, is lacking. Some funding is allocated in the AVS, but its administration by the Township poses potential conflicts of interest for organizations like the Langley Farmers’ Institute, which needs to preserve its ability to lobby the Township of Langley without compromise.

### Resilience

Resilience is a quality that the agricultural community in Langley can develop over time, particularly to mobilize “people and resources to respond to, and influence change.”<sup>69</sup> Communities need to be strategic to develop that resilience, including by:

- Focusing their energies “on mobilizing internal assets (both financial and human) while also leveraging outside resources to achieve their goals;”<sup>70</sup>
- Developing “plans that merge social and economic goals and build local capacity;”<sup>71</sup> and
- Utilizing strategic planning to maximize “their limited time and resources in those areas that will yield the greatest overall benefits.”<sup>72</sup>

Rural organizations themselves can expect to be challenged, over time, by diminishing participation coupled with increasing demand for services, and need for specialized resources to meet them. The CDI report recommends a toolkit of practices to stay innovative and dynamic:

- Utilizing staff well and supporting them with access to professionals (who may or may not be directors)
- Investing in volunteers with training for mutual benefit
- Maintaining engagement with members
- Seeking a large board with ongoing turnover to share the load and expand networks
- Utilizing committees to address specialized issues
- Allowing time for rest and recovery between projects
- Taking the time to periodically re-evaluate objectives

<sup>67</sup> “Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places: Executive Summary Report,” Community Development Institute, University of Northern BC (2006), p3.

<sup>68</sup> “Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places: Executive Summary Report,” Community Development Institute, University of Northern BC (2006), p4.

<sup>69</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p8.

<sup>70</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p5.

<sup>71</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p8.

<sup>72</sup> *The Community Resilience Manual*, Colussi, Centre for Community Enterprise (2000), p8.



- Creating and maintaining reciprocal partnerships
- Keeping abreast of other organizations and their practices to identify unmet needs
- Prioritizing good communication in all activities.<sup>73</sup>

Any agricultural organizations in Langley may benefit from the above advice, as well as by incorporating regular evaluation of progress towards the strategic goals identified in the AVS, the KPU Township of Langley Food System Study, the Township Sustainability Strategy, and the strategic goals they set for themselves over time.

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<sup>73</sup> “Innovative Services and Voluntary Organizations in Rural and Small Town Places: Executive Summary Report,” Community Development Institute, University of Northern BC (2006), p12-13.