# Making Agricultural Connections

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#### INTRODUCTION

Bill Moreland is on the job at 4:45 every morning, seven days a week almost every day of the year. Like dairy farmers across Canada, this is a normal part of his day - a normal part of his farm operation. Michael Webster's book *Home Farm*<sup>1</sup>, describes the Moreland family's life on the land. *Home Farm* is recommended reading "....for anyone who has ever wondered where food really comes from." This comment reflects the gradual growing apart of most Canadians and farming and farm practices. Fewer and fewer people live on farms or have a first-hand knowledge of agriculture.

Just over 80 years ago Canada had very strong roots in the rural landscape and a large number of people living in rural areas were in the business of producing food. In 1911 almost 55% of Canadians lived in a rural setting. British Columbia was one of only two provinces at the time that had more persons living in urban (52%) than rural areas.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout Canada's history, urbanization has increased steadily.<sup>3</sup> While the actual number of farms began to decline in the early 1940's, over the last 50 years the volume of agricultural production has increased by 175 percent.<sup>4</sup> It was not until 1951 that the actual size of the rural population began to decline in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Fewer farms, with increasing production, have allowed for ever-increasing urbanization. While the ratio of urban to farm population has grown further apart, so to has the majority of Canadians' empathy with agriculture. The gradual decrease in farm population, despite overall population increases, continues today. Between 1986 and 1991 the urban population grew in B.C. by more than 355,000. The rural "non-farm" population also grew during the same period by almost 45,000 persons. However, the farm population dropped by more than 1,400 persons. Compared to the rest of Canada, British Columbia's farm population fared relatively well. B.C. had the lowest percentage decrease (2.7%) of any Province during this period. With the exception of Newfoundland, B.C. also had the lowest numerical decrease in farm population.<sup>6</sup>

Since the turn of the century, when 62% of Canadians lived in a rural setting, settlement patterns have changed dramatically. By 1991 just over 80% of British Columbians lived in urban settings, and most of the people living in rural areas were not farmers. Only 1.5 of every 100 persons in the Province in 1991 lived on a farm.<sup>7</sup>

"The number of farms in Canada has been declining since 1941. Between the wars almost one out of every three Canadians lived on a farm. Today it's one out of every twenty-five."

Stuart McLean Welcome Home page 347

Webster, Michael; Home Farm; Camden House Publishing, Camden East, 1989

Department of the Interior, Atlas of Canada - 1915, page 95.

Statistics Canada, Canada Year Book - 1992, Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, Ottawa, 1991, page 73.

McLean, S., Welcome Home: Travels in Smalltown Canada, Penguin Books Canada Ltd., Toronto, 1992, Page 347

<sup>5 &</sup>lt;u>Canada Year Book</u> - 1992, p. 73.

Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 94-129, May 1988 and Cat. No. 93-330, April 1993.

By way of comparison, while the decrease in B.C.'s farm population between 1986 and 1991 was 2.7%, PEI led Canada with a 20% decrease in its farm population. While B.C. had a 1,420 decrease in the actual number of people living on a farm, Quebec led Canadian provinces with a 25,610 decrease (-17.9%) followed by Ontario with a 21,525 decrease (-9.2%).

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 94-129, May 1988 and Cat. No. 93-330, April 1993

TABLE 5
BRITISH COLUMBIA POPULATION - 1991

	Population	% of Total	Change 1986 to 1991
Total Population	3,282,060	100.0%	+398,690
Total Urban	2,640,135	80.4%	+355,130
Total Rural	641,920	19.6%	+43,560
Rural Farm	50,355	1.5%	-1,420
Rural Non-Farm	591,570	18.1%	+44,980

Source: Statistics Canada, Cat No. 94-129, May 1988 and Cat. No. 93-330, April 1993.

Elected officials at all levels of government, along with those persons advising elected officials, have not been immune to the demographic shifts towards increased urbanization. Accordingly an awareness of agriculture for most persons in the position of making or advising on land use decisions has been gradually declining. Moreover, as noted in the Preface, land use planning and agriculture have not been particularly vigorous examples of cross-over disciplines.

There is a clear need to build stronger partnerships at several levels to enhance an understanding of agriculture and act as a foundation upon which to plan for agriculture's sustainable future. There are also several legislative imperatives demanding the building of strong partnerships, including:

- the administrative procedures of the ALCA;
- overlapping regulatory responsibilities between local governments and the Agricultural Land Commission for land in the ALR;
- relationships between the general public, farmers, local governments and the Province in the successful administration of the 'right-to-farm' elements of the FPPA;
- the bylaw review processes of the Municipal Act (Part 26, Div. 8);
- the need to ensure community plans support, accommodate and enhance opportunities to farm in the ALR. (ALCA & Municipal Act).

In just 10 years - 1986 to 1996 - the number of persons in B.C. living in an urban setting increased nearly 3% from 79.2% to 82.1% of the total population.

For further discussion of opportunities to improve awareness of agriculture, see Chapter 9, page 3.

"For the first time we will be able to work together to address some of the most critical issues of our time."

Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Growth Strategies Act Draft Legislation, 1995, p. ii.

#### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

This chapter considers a number of means to strengthen partnerships and enhance working relationships with the farm community and between levels of government on an ongoing basis within the plan delivery system. A key element in the refinement of planning processes will be a stronger integration of available resources and talents and the inclusion of members of the farm sector as active partners in the process.

The need for partnership building is not new. Almost 15 years ago, a joint ALC / Municipal Affairs publication spoke of the need for the ".... province and local governments to act as partners in protecting agricultural land." While cooperation has increased, it has been slow to evolve into effective joint planning processes. There is, therefore, a need to find effective means to break jurisdictional and attitudinal log jams thwarting coordinated policy development.

One effort to do so is the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act*, much of which is directed at providing opportunities for improved coordination by providing for:

- planning coordination at the local government level;
- · linked Provincial and local planning; and
- · intergovernmental implementation agreements,

each of which can improve planning for agriculture and the achievement of agricultural planning goals and objectives. It is precisely these areas - the need for improved horizontal and vertical planning linkages - that will particularly benefit planning for agriculture.

Municipal councils and regional district boards should be afforded an increased role in the development and implementation of agricultural policy. This will ensure sensitivity to local concerns and provide for strong linkages with other planning issues. The Agri-Food Policy, when completed, the ALR and Commission policies, the development of Provincial mandate statements in association with regional growth strategies, the documenting of farm practices<sup>10</sup> and development of Provincial standards to guide bylaw reviews, will each improve agricultural awareness and articulate Provincial agricultural policy. Together they will act as a point of reference to assist local plan and bylaw development. However, it is important that the Provincial commitment to the partnership does not end with the completion of policy documents. The commitment must be ongoing and steps are being taken to ensure this is the case.

Changes to the Agricultural Land Commission Act in 1994 amended the Commission's mandate and set the foundation for stronger partnerships in the development of bylaws, plans and polices - not only with local governments but other governments and agencies as well. The implementation of the Farm Practices Protection Act will also require strong provincial / local government working relationships.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs & the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission, <u>A Guide to the Relationship Between Agricultural Land Reserves and Local Government Plans and Bylaws</u>, Province of British Columbia, 1982, p. 15.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Farm Practices in B.C. Reference Guide, contained within, Strengthening Farming in British Columbia: A Guide to Implementation of the FPPA; September, 1996.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has provided, as part of the growth strategies initiative, a strong set of *principles for partnership* that reflect what local government officials and others have indicated are "...needed to improve planning and help our communities." Although developed for a different purpose, they are presented here (only slightly modified) as a set of basic principles to build stronger partnerships when planning for agriculture. The



conscious use of the principles developed by Municipal Affairs is also intended to ensure a strong link between planning for agriculture and existing planning processes involving local governments embodied within the Municipal Act and Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act.

Representatives of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, MAF, and the ALC meet on-site to discuss an agricultural issue.

#### **Principles For Partnership \***

#### 1. No new institutions.

We have a strong local planning system that should be strengthened and extended. However, based upon existing legislation, amendments may be considered appropriate to improve the local government 'tool kit' for dealing with agricultural issues more effectively. There is a need to marry the traditional expertise built around Provincial resource planning and local government settlement planning through the provision of opportunities for co-management partnerships.

#### 2. Voluntary participation.

Planning works best when there is buy-in. The doors of our planning processes must be opened to allow for mutual respect and partnerships to flourish.

#### 3. Compatibility ... a bias toward agreement.

Consistency and compatibility through an interactive system which encourages and provides opportunity for harmony between local and Provincial policy but allows plenty of room for innovation to thrive. Planning processes should allow for the creation of a shared vision of agriculture's future. Decision-making should be policy, rather than proposal, driven.

#### Principles For Partnership Con't \*

4. Dispute resolution ... as a last resort.

Planning processes need to be finalized but local governments must be assured of opportunities to negotiate collaborative solutions. However, mechanisms should be in place to end the process in a timely manner and in a spirit of compatibility.

5. Broad-based consultation ... early and often.

Those affected by plans should have a say in their development. Interested parties must have early and on-going participation in the process. In the development of agricultural area plans and planning along agriculture's interface, engaging members of the farm community is vital.

6. Regional diversity / regional flexibility.

The planning system must be flexible enough to accommodate regional diversity. Sensitivity to local circumstances requires balance and planning processes based on inclusion.

7. Provincial direction and support.

The Provincial government must make its expectations clear. The articulation of Provincial agricultural goals and policies aided by the development of guidelines and other support products is required. The ALC and MAF must be prepared to work pro-actively, rather than reactively, with local governments. Ongoing participation in the planning process and monitoring programmes will further policy harmony and assure continued linkages.

\* Drawn from: Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Growth Strategies Act Draft Legislation, Province of B. C., 1995, p. iii.

#### **FARM SIDE CONNECTIONS**

There are two broad areas in which it is important that strong connections are maintained between local governments and farm communities, and others involved with the formulation of land use and agricultural policy. The *first* involves maintaining strong day-to-day, year-by-year connections with agricultural interests. The *second* is assuring that the farm community is involved in the development and revision of OCP's and regulatory bylaws - and most particularly during the development of plans specifically involving agricultural areas.

#### 1. Maintaining Ongoing Links With Agriculture

Land use policy affecting agriculture is constantly evolving. Issues arise, plans and bylaws are amended, and new development proposals impacting farm operations and applications involving the ALR are considered in most areas almost continuously. It is the time, between major reviews of official plans and bylaw updates, when benefit can be derived from maintaining strong, ongoing links between decision makers (and their staff) and the agricultural community.

## ALC Survey: Local Government Links With Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food:

a key source of agricultural advice

"We have found the Agricultural Advisory Committee is a valuable resource and their input on items that we forward to them for evaluation is extremely important to us."

Cowichan Valley Regional District

See: Chapter 9, p. 67 Agricultural Advisory Committees, including a model terms of reference. In 1995 the ALC undertook a survey of 64 local governments to discover the various methods used to establish formal links with the farm community. The purpose of the ALC survey was to gain a better understanding of the different ways local governments are working with farm groups and others.

A total of 55 local governments (86%) responded to the survey. <sup>12</sup> Table 6 on the following page highlights some of the key findings of the survey.

Besides the actual base results, the survey provided several other insights. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has regional offices in most agricultural areas of the Province (see: *Appendix 12*). Nearly three quarters of all respondents indicated that they occasionally or regularly sought input from MAF. This was in fact the most consistent means used by local governments to gain advice on agricultural issues.

TABLE 6
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LINKS WITH AGRICULTURE
- SUMMARY OF ALC SURVEY RESPONSE -

	Method	Yes	No	<u>(na)</u>	Total*
1.	Established an Agricultural Advisory Committee;	10	44		54
2.	Regularly consult with their local Farmers' Institute;	21	21	11~	53
3.	Consult with other farm organizations;	37	17		54
4.	Regularly seek advice from MAF;	39	14		53
5.	Subscribe to an agricultural publication	1	51		52

- \* Note: While 55 local governments responded to the questionnaire, not all responded to all questions.
- In the case of 11 respondents it was indicated that a link with a local farmers' institute was not possible because of an absence of an institute in their jurisdiction.

Ten jurisdictions noted that Agricultural Advisory Committees (AAC) were in place in their areas. However, an increasing number of local governments were discovering the value of an AAC. Seven of the ten AAC's had been established since 1990. The benefit of an agricultural advisory committee is that it works from within, rather than outside the local government structure and is readily involved in providing advice through the referral process or by working on special studies concerning agricultural issues.

Survey Response - 26 regional districts and 29 municipalities.

Twenty-one respondents indicated that they actively seek advice from their local farmers' institute. Because farmers' institutes are not spread evenly across the province, some jurisdictions do not have one active in their area. Several jurisdictions, such as the Municipality of Delta, have very active farmers' institutes and close links have been fostered between them and local councils or regional boards. In some cases, because of their ability to embrace several commodities, farmers' institutes can achieve the same balanced representation of the farm community as can an agricultural advisory committee. With about 60 farmers' institutes in B.C. (see Appendix 16), there are opportunities for an increased role for these farm organizations in advising local governments on issues important in their communities.

#### Issues and Advice

The ALC survey found that local governments are seeking advice from the agricultural community on a broad range of issues which can be grouped into three broad categories: (The number of responses identified in brackets)

- 1. General Land Use Issues and Processes (79);
- 2. Agricultural Policy; (33) and
- 3. Impacts and Conflict Issues (11)

The 55 respondent local governments identified 29 separate issues, topics and processes on which advice is regularly sought. The following were the seven most-often mentioned subjects or issues.

- OCP's and other Plans and Land Use Policy (23)
- Zoning and Rural Land Use Bylaws and Amendments (16)
- Land Use Issues and Pressure (13)
- ALR Applications (9)
- Irrigation, Water and Drainage Issues (9)
- Environmental and Wildlife Issues (6)
- Agr. Conflict and Impact Issues (6)

Some local governments actively seek or secure "seats" for agricultural representatives on local committees or commissions. However, only five respondents indicated an agricultural presence on local *economic development commissions* (EDCs). In key farm and ranching communities there are clear opportunities for increased agricultural representation on EDC's. Given the economic importance of farming and ranching in many communities, a strong link between a local EDC and the farm community would is natural.

A far more active interaction is occurring within advisory planning commissions (APCs) established under the Municipal Act. Eighteen jurisdictions indicated they actively pursue agricultural representatives on their APCs. For example, besides the APC, Delta also has secured seats for agricultural representatives on the Environment and the Healthy Community's Committees.

There are a large number of other agricultural groups and organizations - 37 in all - that respondents indicated they periodically consulted to gain advice on issues affecting agriculture. These range from commodity organizations, such as the Blueberry Growers' Association, to rural ratepayer groups. Some groups are long-standing and able to provide advice on a continuous, year-to-year basis.

#### Example:

Several of the policies in the Langley Rural Plan reflect the involvement of the local Economic Development Commission, and in particular the participation of the agricultural representative on the EDC in the development of the Plan.

Other Agricultural Organizations

Others are special, single purpose committees created to examine and advise on a specific issue.

Council and Board members drawn from the farm community The need for local governments to maintain on-going links with the farm community is emphasized by the gradual shrinking of the number of farmers and ranchers serving on municipal councils and regional boards. Although not a direct question, only five local governments specifically indicated that normally at least some council or board members are drawn from the agricultural community, and that this constitutes an important means to gain insights into local agricultural issues.

From the results of the survey, most local governments are clearly making efforts to enhance their awareness of issues important to farming communities. The methods and frequency of consultation between local governments and agricultural interests, however, do vary considerably. Of the 55 responding jurisdictions:

- · most used more than a single means to seek agricultural advice;
- five employed several different means but seven indicated little or no contact with producers or producer groups;
- most local governments clearly saw MAF as an important source of information on agricultural matters;
- many local governments attempted to ensure that a farm representative is sat on their advisory planning commission;
- farmers' institutes, in many communities, played important and potentially growing roles, in providing farm side connections; and
- agricultural advisory committees, particularly in the last five years, have found an increasing role within local government processes.

Most municipalities and regional districts with important agricultural communities actively seek to involve the farm community in an advisory capacity. However, even in jurisdictions where agriculture is a dominant land use, there was no indication that an agrologist or other agricultural specialist was maintained on staff.

The survey, however, also indicated that the advisory role was often not one of steady involvement but rather single issue motivated. This suggests that there remain untapped opportunities in many communities to draw upon the knowledge and understanding of farmers and ranchers on a variety of decisions that affect agriculture.

#### Ensuring On-going Agricultural Connections

As indicated by the ALC survey, many local governments have taken steps to involve the farm community in an advisory capacity. However, where this is not the case and agriculture makes an important contribution to the local economy or represents a significant portion of an area's land base, the following check list outlines different means to connect with agriculture. In any particular jurisdiction some approaches will be more applicable than others. Normally the most effective links will occur when a number of different connective tools are used in combination.

Designated Council Agricultural Liaison Person

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Where possible, designate a staff person to specifically deal with agricultural matters, plan and bylaw development associated with the farm area and to act as a liaison with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and other farm organizations.

Electoral Area Directors' Agricultural Links

Agricultural Advisory Committees

"The Board is very pleased with the work of the AAC which has provided useful advice on a number of Regional and agricultural issues."

Greater Vancouver Regional District -ALC Survey

Commodity Organizations,

Farmers' Institutes

&

Non-governmental Agricultural Organizations

- In the case of *municipalities*, designate a Council member as a "farm / ranch liaison" person to act as agriculture's voice. In this capacity the Councilor can:
  - meet regularly with the farmers' institute(s) and other farm organizations and act as a point of access to Council for agriculture;
  - sit as Council's representative on an agricultural advisory committee:
  - ensure fellow Council members are fully aware of concerns and issues effecting agriculture;
  - assist in a mediative capacity where land use conflicts involving agriculture may arise - a function that may be of considerable importance in more urbanized areas;
  - consult with adjoining municipalities or regional districts where 'cross boundary' agricultural issues arise; and
  - ensure consultative processes are in place with the agricultural community and that farm / ranch representatives have 'seats' on appropriate public committees of council.
- In the case of regional districts, in those areas with a significant agricultural presence, the electoral area director should make a special effort to consult with the community. In this way the director could play a similar role on the regional board as a municipal council member designated as a "farm liaison" person.
- Appointment of an agricultural advisory committee (AAC) to specifically provide Council or the Board with advice on agricultural issues. Efforts should be made to select AAC members who represent key agricultural sectors in the area. Existing farm / ranch organizations such as a local farmers' institute could assist in the appointment of members. (See Chapter 9, page 67 - Agricultural Advisory Committees for further discussion and model terms of reference.)

It is suggested that AACs will be most effective serving a dual function by providing:

- i. "reactive" advice on matters such as land use proposals, rezoning and plan amendments, ALR applications and other ongoing policy considerations; and
- ii. "proactive" advice by acting as a steering committee in the completion of investigations and reports to Council or Board on local agricultural issues (Such as the impacts on agriculture of non-farm use and transportation proposals, drainage or irrigation concerns, the impacts of parks and recreation, the improvement of relationships between agriculture and environmental interests and enhancing awareness of agriculture).
- A strong consultative relationship should be developed between Councils and Boards and local agricultural organizations. As indicated by Appendix 17, B.C. has almost 400 different agricultural organizations. The different groups range from commodity organizations to farmers' institutes (see: Appendix 16) to non-governmental agricultural organizations.

"The Central Kootenay Regional District works closely with the Creston Valley Agricultural Society"

ALC Survey

Participation on local government committees and commissions

Federal and Provincial Government Agricultural Connections

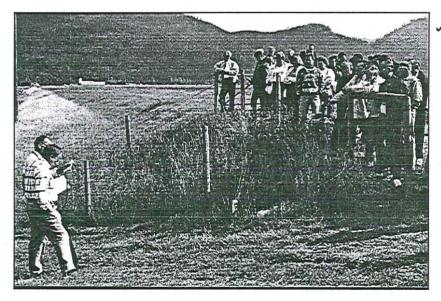
Farm tours, workshops and other means to facilitate farm side connections Some issues may relate specifically to a single or relatively few commodities. In such cases direct consultation with an associated commodity organization can be valuable. In contrast, farmers' institutes normally represent most, if not all, agricultural interests in a given area. Several local governments have developed and maintained strong, ties with their local farmers' institutes drawing upon its membership for key community committees, special studies and planning processes. It may also be worthwhile to consult with the several province-wide farm/ranching organizations including the B.C. Agriculture Council, Cattlemen's Association and Horticulture Coalition.

- Maintain a "seat" for agricultural representatives at the table of key local government commissions and committees such as the Advisory Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Healthy Community Committee, Environmental Advisory Committee and Drainage and Irrigation Committees.
- Maintain avenues of consultation with Provincial and Federal agricultural ministries and agencies. These include the ALC and MAF as well as Agriculture Canada and Agri-Food Canada.

Through the application and plan / bylaw review processes local governments and the ALC have maintained close consultative relationships over the years. The ALC survey of local governments indicated that MAF represents a key agricultural point of contact for local governments.

(See: Appendix 12 for the location of MAF offices and Appendix 13 for a list of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada offices in B.C.)

For elected officials wishing to make contact with their local agricultural community there are other, sometimes less formal, opportunities. Some local governments have organized agricultural workshops and conferences as a means of consulting with the farm community. Farm organizations often put on farm tours. MAF regularly conducts 'field days' and for the past several years has organized farm tours at the annual UBCM convention.



Direct marketing is a growing part of the B.C. farm scene. Producers retailing from their farm gates provide an opportunity for everyone to make a direct connection with B.C. Agriculture.

**UBCM Farm Tour** 

#### "Experience in British Columbia and elsewhere indicates that good, implementable plans evolve from broadly-based, inclusive planning processes."

Ministry of Municipal Affairs, *Growth* Strategies for the 1990's and Beyond, 1994, p. 10.

### When developing an official community plan:

- undertake farm area inventory work;
- involve the agricultural advisory committee;
- consult with farm representatives through focus group sessions; and
- involve, at an early stage, MAF and ALC "Agri-Team" members.

#### 2. Engaging the Planning Process

Most local governments are regularly involved with the development and updating of plans and bylaws. Where agriculture is a prominent feature within a planning area, it is important that the farm and ranching communities be directly engaged in these processes to ensure full consideration of issues and concerns of the agricultural community.

Where *community-wide official plans* are being developed there will normally be many issues under consideration. Agriculture, despite being of considerable importance to many communities, is often overwhelmed by urban issues that affect the majority of citizens. To provide an improved focus on agricultural issues there should be a conscious effort to "tap" into the input of farm area representatives. There are a number ways that this can be accomplished.

- i. Undertake, as part of the plan development process, necessary inventory work within the farm area to:
  - ensure a clear understanding of the resource and economic value of agriculture to the community;
  - · identify important agricultural infrastructure requirements;
  - · identify issues and solutions;
  - identify existing or potential conflicts between agriculture and other land uses; and
  - · determine the need for:
    - further edge planning work,
    - designation of development permit areas for the protection of farming; and
    - a more detailed agricultural area plan following the adoption of the community plan.

(see: Land Use Inventory Guide, Chapter 7, pages 22 to 27)

- ii. If an agricultural advisory committee (AAC) has been appointed, involve the committee by having it:
  - establish a consultation process with local farm groups to identify issues important to the farm community;
  - meet with the Council/Board and staff to outline issues the plan should consider in combination with a farm area tour to provide elected officials with a "hands-on" understanding of concerns; and
  - have the AAC review and comment on the draft plan prior to adoption.
- iii. Where an AAC has <u>not</u> been appointed, identify farm groups within the area and invite representatives to focus group sessions, attended by Council and staff representatives, to help identify agricultural issues the plan should consider. While the plan is in a draft stage, reconstitute the focus group to review and comment on the draft plan prior to its adoption.
- iv. engage MAF and the ALC "Agri-Team" members at an early stage in the process to help enhance awareness of local agricultural activities, assist with issue identification and advice on specific technical and policy questions, report on past changes to the ALR and help, establish links with representatives of the farm community.

Agricultural Area Plans - a sub-area plan focused on farm areas.

As detailed in Chapter 7, within the several well-established agricultural communities of the Province, *Agricultural Area Plans* should be considered as the best means to focus land use planning processes on agricultural issues and solutions. Interwoven throughout Chapter 7 are means to actively involve the agricultural community in the plan development process. While details will not be repeated here, the key elements include:

- the direct involvement of producers in the development of planning studies and agricultural strategies, including assistance in the inventory and issue identification process;
- ii. appointing an Agricultural Area Plan Working Group, including strong producer representation, to oversee the actual development of the draft plan; and
- iii. involving provincial "Agri-Teams" made up of representatives of MAF and the ALC to assist with plan development and to sit on the agricultural area plan working group.

#### Provincial Agri-Teams

- Provincial "Agri-Teams" represent a means to develop closer working
  relationships with local governments achieve the objectives of the FPPA
  and the 1994 amendments to the Agricultural Land Commission Act, as
  well as to support regional growth strategy processes. The objective is
  to assist municipalities and regional districts in a far more "proactive"
  manner at an early stage in the process when planning studies, policy
  development and bylaw reviews are being considered that affect
  agriculture.
- Along with "Agri-Teams" is a commitment on the part of MAF and the ALC to develop guide documents, conduct workshops and reassign personnel to provide meaningful and timely assistance to local governments.
- The core of the "Agri-Teams" will be regional and district MAF personnel familiar with the local area and the ALC regional planning officer. Augmenting the team will be central support coming from the Resource Management and Planning Branch of MAF and the ALC Policy Branch. In addition other MAF personnel may be drawn upon for technical advice on an as-needed basis. Also, information support is being developed in the form of the web site "BC FarmScape".

"Farm Operators Still the Workhorses of the Self-Employed"

Farm operators worked an average of 53 hours per week in 1991, compared with all selfemployed people who averaged 41 ours, and the average working Canadian who averaged 33 hours."

Statistics Canada - Cat. no. 96-301, p. 29.

#### INVOLVING THE FARM COMMUNITY

Farmers are busy people. For most farmers their days are long and during certain periods of the year the work days get even longer. Moreover, many B.C. farms are part-time operations where one or both partners in a family farm have off-farm jobs.

The farm population, as a percentage of the general population, has been gradually declining. When involving members of the farm community in planning processes on an on-going or project specific basis the demands on farmers' time should be carefully considered. Participation can quickly tax the human resources available in the farm community.

Involving members of the farm community in planning processes should be regarded as a priority.

This may mean shifting day time meetings to evenings or closing down the work of a committee for a number of weeks during critical periods of the year. These demands will also vary among different farmers. Certain operators may be affected less by seasonal shifts in workload than others. It is important to be aware of these time constraints and discuss these questions carefully with committee members.

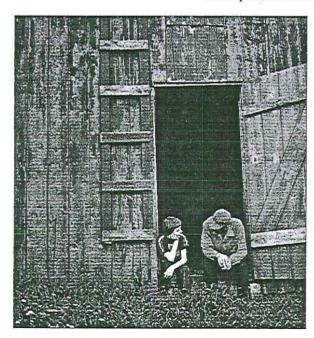
New members from the farm community on a committee should be made fully aware of time demands and the committee's meeting schedule. Is the committee on-going (agricultural advisory committee) or single issue focused (zoning bylaw review or transportation study)? Is the appointment for a specified period of time? If single issue focused, what is the anticipated time period of the group's activity? What is the normal committee meeting schedule - monthly, every two weeks / daytime or evening meetings?

It is also important that the objectives of committees or focus groups be clearly established and participants be made aware of their role. For example, the objective may be to produce a specific product such as an agricultural study or strategy, or review and comment on a draft plan or bylaw. In other cases a committee may be charged with actually producing a draft of the agricultural section of a zoning bylaw or oversee the development of an agricultural area plan. Where the role is strictly advisory, this should be clearly enunciated. It should be made clear that elected officials may, on complex issues, have to consider input from several points of view. As a result, advice from one particular group may not always be wholly acted upon.

While women farm partners have heavy demands on their time, they should be actively sought out to be involved in planning processes. Besides bringing their knowledge of farm operations and impacts, farm women can also bring a varied perspective to the table that can enrich the consideration of agricultural issues important to farm areas.

In conclusion, involving members of the farm community should be regarded as a priority when developing land use inventories and background material concerning farm areas, seeking advice on agricultural issues, or undertaking the development or review of plans and bylaws affecting farming and farm areas.

> When seeking the involvement of the farm community, local farm organizations should be asked for their advice and participation. All members of the farm community should be regarded as potential participants, and committee structures should be sensitive to on-farm time demands.



## Agricultural Area Plans

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#### INTRODUCTION

It is relatively common for municipalities to adopt an OCP that geographically encompasses the whole of the municipality. However, the *Municipal Act* provides opportunity for local governments to *adopt one or more community plans for one or more areas*. Commonly this sub-area plan often finds expression as a 'neighbourhood' plan applied to a defined portion of a jurisdiction. The sub-area or neighbourhood plan is adopted in a similar manner and has a similar status as an OCP. While the sub-area plan must achieve policy consistency with the community-wide OCP, it can also provide far greater policy detail.

Regional Districts, in contrast to municipalities, rarely define the entire breadth of their jurisdiction as a single planning area for the adoption of an OCP. Rather, defined portions of the regional district, often based on electoral areas, are designated for development of an OCP (or Rural Land Use Bylaw). In some cases, portions of one or more electoral areas may form the planning area and be referenced as the "valley", or "rural" planning area. In this context, an Agricultural Area Plan (AAP) could represent a single sub-area defined for planning purposes within a regional district, or could be a sub-component of a larger OCP area.

#### An Agricultural Area Plan (AAP)

- An AAP is a sub-area plan applied to a farm area(s) that will be
  predominantly, but not necessarily exclusively, in agricultural use; will be
  geographically smaller than the full jurisdictional area of either a
  municipality or regional district; and may involve two or more
  jurisdictions.
- The general legislative status of an AAP and means of adoption is similar to an OCP as prescribed in the *Municipal Act* although there is a need for policy consistency with an adopted OCP.
- The primary purposes of an AAP are to express agricultural policy at a level of detail that can effectively deal with issues important to the farm community, enhance the potential for land use and resource compatibility and clearly define agriculture's place in the larger community.
- An AAP is intended to achieve:
  - an enhanced understanding of agriculture as a basis for determining issues important to the farm community and establishing solutionoriented policies;
  - greater focus on the farmland base and agricultural issues;
  - inclusive planning processes where members of the agricultural community are full partners in the plan's development; and
  - improved local and Provincial (and Federal as appropriate) policy integration.

Some planning exercises have a more 'functional' orientation such as a park plan, environmentally-sensitive area plan or transportation plan. Combining both the areal and functional applications to defined agricultural areas offers considerable promise as a means to deal with farm issues and express agricultural policy.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Where appropriate, planning exercises should focus on the issues of agricultural sustainability through the use of a subarea Agricultural Area Plan.

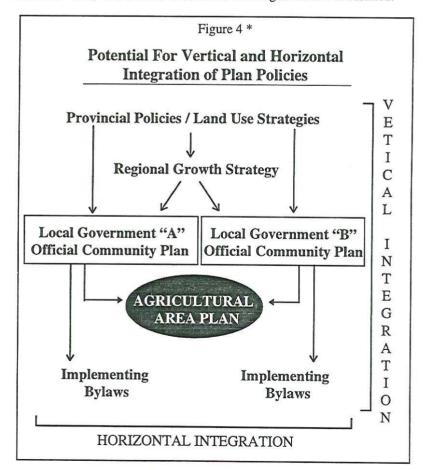
Within defined AAP areas, the OCP should perform its traditional function of providing broad policy objectives, leaving greater policy detail to the operational level AAP.

As a result, within key agricultural communities, the development of sub-area Agricultural Area Plans has the greatest potential to ensure a sufficient level of detail to identify and effectively deal with issues important to the farm community. It also ensures that agriculture provides the context within which to judge competing land use activities in farm areas. Within a defined agricultural planning area, the AAP can avoid agriculture being overwhelmed by settlement / urban planning issues.

#### LINKAGES WITH OTHER PLANS

Rather than functioning in isolation, the AAP should be part of the larger planning hierarchy. Most immediately the policies of the official community plan can provide explicit direction in the undertaking of an AAP. In turn the OCP will, in many cases, be linked to regional growth strategies or other regional initiatives (e.g. regional servicing programmes) and Provincial policy.

One of the clear strengths of planning for agriculture at the local level is that in most cases, the same staff and elected officials developing, adopting and administering community and other plans and service delivery will also be overseeing the creation of Agricultural Area Plans. Focused edge planning, as discussed in *Chapter 8*, will provide linkages with agriculture's immediate nonfarm land use neighbours. In addition, the implementation of 'agricultural impact assessments' (see *Chapter 9*, page 8 "Agricultural Impact Assessments") and where an AAP planning area may cross jurisdictional boundaries (see: page 7), additional opportunities for plan linkages with adjoining jurisdictions will be afforded. Thus, both vertical and horizontal integration can be fostered.



\* Figure 4 depicts a situation where an agricultural planning area involves two different local governments, resulting in the development and adoption of a cross jurisdictional AAP

Planning for agriculture should be undertaken in a focused manner but not in isolation from other community concerns - integration, not segregation.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

All land in the ALR within a jurisdiction should be the subject of more focused processes aimed at planning for agriculture's sustainable future. This may include farmland not in the ALR as well as non-farmland that may form part of the larger agricultural community.

The strength of the Agricultural Area Plan will be the focus and perspective it brings to the planning and policy development process. The AAP will ensure the planning process is not captured or overwhelmed by other, albeit important, community issues. The AAP will also allow for far greater policy balance than is currently the case. At the same time, other processes will assure that the AAP does not stand in isolation.

#### DEFINING AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AREAS

In many cases farming and the ALR are often dominant features in the planning area. However, only rarely is the area referred to as the "agricultural area" for planning purposes. This appears to be due, in part, to the presence of a mix of land uses. It may also be due to an apparent lack of appreciation for the role that farming has in a particular landscape, despite agriculture being the dominant use and an important economic force in the community.

Generally, all land in the ALR within municipalities and regional districts, whether in farm use or not, should be subject to more focused planning processes than have commonly been applied in the past. However, the defined agricultural planning areas, so often found within close proximity to urban areas, deserve particular attention.

When should an agricultural area remain simply part of a broader OCP planning exercise (with an enhanced emphasis on agricultural issues) and when should an agricultural sub-area be defined for the purposes of undertaking an Agricultural Area Plan? While there is no hard and fast rule, here are some broad guidelines that may help determine the appropriate planning instrument to apply in a given area. In any event, even where an AAP is developed, this should be supported by broader but consistent objectives of the OCP (See: Chapter 5, pages 7 and 8 for additional detail on the role of the OCP)

#### Official Community Plan / RLUB

- The agricultural land base represents either:
  - smaller isolated blocks; or
  - expansive areas, with limited agricultural diversity and largely removed from urban areas.
- The issues, while important, tend to be relatively less complex
- Broad portions of the ALR may not currently be in agricultural production (example: forestry or mixed range / forestry areas).

#### Agricultural Area Plan

- The agricultural area is closely -integrated with urban areas.
- The farm community is relatively large and cohesive - geographically, biophysically or in terms of commodity types.
- The agricultural issues are relatively complex.

The diversity of British Columbia's agricultural land base and commodity types demands that care be taken in defining an agricultural planning area. AAP areas should be based upon relatively cohesive, complete agricultural communities with a strong biophysical basis and / or other agricultural criteria. An AAP will be predominantly made up of agricultural lands, but will invariably include other land uses that are often found in association with agricultural areas (examples: rural residential uses, institutional uses serving rural areas (schools, cemeteries, fire halls) park or wildlife areas and rural commercial uses). At the discretion of local governments, other non-ALR lands could also be included in the agricultural planning area, either due to their current or potential agricultural use or their impact on the agricultural community.

## Factors Defining Agricultural Planning Areas

Any set of criteria established to determine cohesive agricultural areas for planning purposes will differ between regions and should be sensitive to local circumstances. The most important source in determining what geographic area constitutes an agricultural area will be the advice provided by members of the local farm community.

- Use the ALR as a starting point in defining an AAP area.
- Attempt to define complete / cohesive agricultural communities, this may include some non-farm uses and land not within the ALR.
- Determine, geographically, the "jurisdictional" boundaries of local farm organizations such as farmers' institutes. How do local farmers define their farm community? This should form a key factor in delineating an agriculturally cohesive area.
- Determine if there are areas of common commodity types.
- Identify a number of key criteria such as: number of farms, gross farm receipts, number of hectares and the percentage of a jurisdiction or planning area in farm use or in the ALR.
- Outline areas that display similar biophysical characteristics such as soil types and agricultural capability.
- Determine major physical parameters such as a single valley, watershed area or floodplain vs. upland areas.
- Determine the impact of major natural or "built" physical features such as rivers, lakes, highways and rail lines in delineating farm communities.
- Identify functional, (administrative) areas such as irrigation or water districts.
- Identify jurisdictional (municipal / regional district) boundaries.

The overriding objective is to define, as an agricultural planning area, that portion of a jurisdiction within which agricultural land or farm use is dominant. For this reason the inclusion of relatively large, non-agricultural and non-ALR, forest, recreation or rural or urban uses should be discouraged. While there may be reasons of convenience for including a host of different uses and land forms

in a single planning area, doing so will tend to defeat the purpose of focusing the planning exercise on agriculture issues. There may, however, be some legitimate exceptions. For example, rural residential or hobby farm areas or topographic breaks adjacent to agricultural areas (but not in the ALR), may make a positive contribution as buffer areas and be considered as "allied" land uses. In such cases these associated uses or land forms could be considered for inclusion within the agricultural planning area.

In defining agricultural planning areas, strong local input is essential. It is because of the variations of agricultural areas that are found within even a single jurisdiction that demand bottom up processes to define AAP areas by local governments with the full involvement of the farm community.

Traditional planning instruments have tended to stay within prescribed jurisdictional boundaries in their development, adoption and administration. However, it is common for agricultural areas, based upon biophysical realities, to defy local government jurisdictional boundaries. For this reason, it is suggested that the process of defining an agricultural planning area consider, but not necessarily be dictated by, local government jurisdictional boundaries. Thus a logical agricultural planning area may involve two or more local jurisdictions.

#### Cross Jurisdictional Agricultural Area Planning

- Define the AAP area and determine if more than one jurisdiction is involved.
- Where two or more jurisdictions are involved consider a joint planning process.

Upon agreement to undertake a joint planning process:

- an AAP working group (see page 12 to 14) with an appropriate balance of interests is appointed and terms of reference jointly agreed to;
- the working group oversees necessary land use inventory, identifies issues, undertakes a public participation programme, develops plan policies, completes a draft plan and recommends a joint monitoring programme; and
- each of the Councils / Boards involved in the process adopts associated portions of the joint plan as per normal (sub-area) OCP procedures.

In response to this situation, efforts should be extended to bring jurisdictions together for the purpose of joint planning exercises focused on a single agricultural planning area. This is largely a modification of the concept of "cross-acceptance" of plans and land use strategies.<sup>2</sup> Once the plan is developed, each jurisdiction involved in the process could adopt their portion of the plan. On a broader scale, this concept was used when the four Lower Mainland

It is important in defining cohesive agricultural areas that input from the farm community is solicited.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

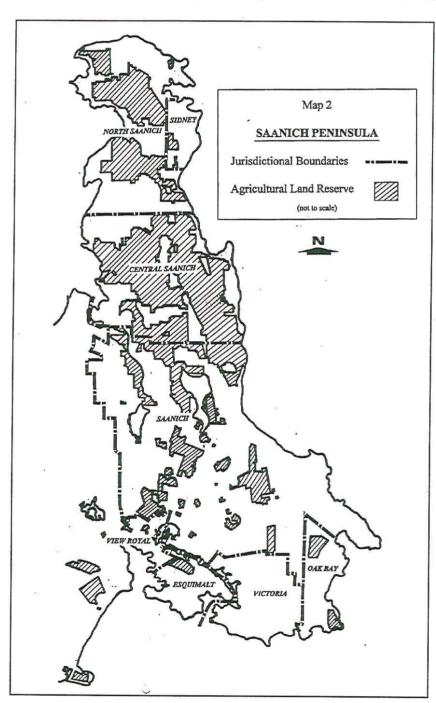
- The defining of AAP areas should consider, but not necessarily be dictated by, local government jurisdictional boundaries.
- Where appropriate, the ALC and MAF should encourage cross boundary, agricultural area planning processes.

Section 878(2) of the *Municipal Act* does provide for a community plan to make reference to a matter outside a local government's jurisdiction but it may only do so in terms of stating a broad objective where a plan affects an adjoining municipality or regional district. Section 882(3)(d) & (e) of the *Municipal Act* requires that a plan be referred to a jurisdiction that may be affected by the plan for comment prior to adoption.

For further reference to the concept of "cross-accept" see <u>Growth Strategies For the 1990's and Beyond, Ministry of Municipal Affairs</u>, September, 1994, p. 14.

regional districts were incorporated in 1967. Each regional district assumed administrative responsibilities for their portion of the Lower Mainland Regional Plan. Linkage was maintained through the Lower Mainland Planning Review Panel made up of representatives from each of the four regional boards. In this case, the updating of the Plan in the late 1970's was also undertaken jointly with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

Section 878(2) of the *Municipal Act* provides scope for an official community plan of one jurisdiction to make reference in policy to the development of a joint



Agricultural Area Plan for a portion of an adjoining jurisdiction. Although there appears to be no legislative reason why two or more adjoining local governments could not establish a joint planning process, this effort may be encouraged and better facilitated with clearer legislative authority.

There are several advantages to cross boundary planning for agriculture, including the completion of joint inventory work and monitoring programmes, which could realize cost savings and policy and regulatory consistency within single agricultural communities. It is anticipated that there are several situations throughout the Province where opportunities exist to undertake joint cross boundary planning processes within single agricultural communities.

As illustrated by the map adjoining map, the ALR in the Saanich Peninsula is spread among several municipal jurisdictions. In some cases. blocks of land in the ALR are severed by municipal boundaries. The farmland on the Peninsula is of a similar biophysical makeup and the issues facing agriculture in one municipality are often common to the Peninsula as a whole. In recognition of this situation. four municipalities - Saanich, Central Saanich, Sidney and North Saanich - have been

It is difficult for members of a single farm community to understand why regulations affecting such things as lot line set backs, minimum parcel sizes or lot coverage for farm structures, differ between jurisdictions when a municipal or regional boundary may be defined simply by a rural road with farms on either side operating under different land use regulations.

Key steps in developing an AAP working jointly on a Strategic Plan for Agriculture on the Saanich Peninsula. While development of the Strategy was initiated and is supported by each municipal Council, the actual work is being overseen by a Steering Committee made up predominantly of local farmers.

The draft Strategy contains several objectives including one to develop, "...subarea operational level Agricultural Area Plans (AAP's) to link with OCP's and associated bylaws..." and further. "It is suggested that an Agricultural Area Planning Working Group (AAPWG) be formed to initiate plan preparation."

In this case the joint development of common agricultural policies and subsequent adoption by each municipality of their portion of an agricultural area plan offers considerable opportunity to deal more effectively with common concerns and to apply consistent land use regulation within this single agricultural area. An example of the impact of a joint approach was the work the Steering Committee did in identifying and enunciating the need for irrigation water - a problem common to the area as a whole.

#### DEVELOPING AN AGRICULTURAL AREA PLAN

The following section outlines several fundamental elements in developing an Agricultural Area Plan. For planners reviewing this material there will be a degree of familiarity with discussions concerning the completion of land use inventories, plan content and public consultation. However, it was felt that many of the important components of an AAP should be captured in one location. The need to develop the plan through an integration of differing interests is emphasized, as well as involvement of the farm community in the plan development process. For many of these people, the *Municipal Act* requirements, the different components of a community plan, and the need for policy consistency, may not be as familiar as they are to the practicing planner.

Key steps in the development of an Agricultural Area Plan:

- Identify cohesive agricultural communities.

  (See: page 5 "Defining Agricultural Planning Areas")
- Use, as appropriate, official community plan policies to articulate the intent to undertake an agricultural area plan and identify the AAP planning area. (See Chapter 5, page 7, "Official Community Plans")
- Establish an Agricultural Area Plan Working Group (AAPWG) for the purpose of developing a draft plan for the Council or Board.
   (See: Page 12 "Agricultural Area Plan Working Group")
- The AAPWG undertakes the drafting of the Agricultural Area Plan.
- Council / Board undertake appropriate plan review and adoption procedures. (See: Page 35, "Plan Adoption / Implementation")
- Undertake appropriate plan implementation procedures.

The following is a more detailed outline of the process for developing agricultural area plans and for developing agricultural policies within more traditional OCP planning exercises based on the key principles of fostering partnerships, as outlined in Chapter 6, page 5.

#### A PROCESS FOR COMMENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AREA PLANS <sup>3</sup>

- Local government, in consultation with representatives of the farm community and with input from MAF and the ALC, should identify cohesive agricultural communities to provide a geographic basis for undertaking agricultural area planning.
- Where an agricultural planning area involves two or more jurisdictions, a
  joint cross-boundary planning process should be considered by the affected
  jurisdictions.
- Local government, through stand-alone policy statements or policies within
  an official community plan, should indicate the need to develop a sub-area
  'agricultural area plan' and through associated map schedules, define the
  agricultural planning area.
- Funding sources should be pursued from existing programmes and, in the
  case of cross-boundary planning processes, a joint funding strategy should be
  developed and agreed to by participant jurisdictions.
- Local government, by resolution, should initiate the agricultural area planning process.
- Local government should organize a joint agency meeting<sup>4</sup>, including representatives of the local farm community, to discuss the broad outline of the planning process.

#### This may include:

- consideration of inventory necessities;
- division of responsibilities<sup>5</sup>;
- an outline of the consultative process;
- time frame:
- the need for outside assistance to complete the Plan; and
- membership on the 'Agricultural Area Plan Working Group' (see below).
- The report of the joint agency should be reviewed by Council / Board. The
  geographic extent of the planning area, timing and basic terms of reference
  and membership on the AAPWG should be formally established by
  resolution.
- The AAPWG should be established to oversee the development of the draft AAP.

This outlines one possible process for commencement of an AAP. There may, of course, be variations on this theme.

The joint agency meeting(s) could be modeled after, or draw upon, the membership of Inter-Governmental Advisory Committees associated with regional growth strategies, where available.

For example: the lead role of local government staff, the role and need for outside consultant assistance and provincial agency / ministry support products.

## 1. Forming an Agricultural Area Plan Working Group (APPWG)

Municipal Councils or Regional Boards will continue to assume ultimate responsibility for the adoption of the Agricultural Area Plan within the framework of the *Municipal Act* and other relevant Provincial legislation. In its linkage role, the AAPWG membership will provide for the blending of strong local government representation with local, non-governmental interests - both agricultural and non-agricultural - as well as Provincial interests. The AAPWG is, therefore, intended to be a "living" expression of plan development through the fostering of partnerships. Some communities have utilized Advisory Planning Commissions (APCs) to assist in overseeing the development of OCPs and neighbourhood plans. While the AAPGW may have some functional similarities to an APC, it is designed to be a far more integrated and focused body which will be terminated upon completion of the Agricultural Area Plan.

For local citizens, the AAPGW provides a "seat at the table" and is not simply a supplement to the more formal consultative process that may be developed (surveys, workshops, information meetings and hearings). Local farm and nonfarm citizens of the community, through the AAPGW, will be part of the team that will oversee the actual development of the draft plan from the bottom up.

As is currently often the case, local government planning staff will assume responsibility for much of the day-to-day development of the draft plan, although this may be supplemented by the assistance of outside consultants. However, it should be anticipated that Provincial ministries and agencies will be called upon to make a more direct contribution by way of technical support products, particularly in the case of MAF and the ALC.

The Agricultural Area Plan Working Group's primary function is to oversee the development of the draft Agricultural Area Plan and report to the Council or Board.

The Agricultural Area Plan Working Group is:

- an example;
- a product; and
- facilitator of the inclusive process.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture and Food participate, as requested, on Agricultural Area Plan Working Groups and provide, to the fullest extent possible, basic technical support to the Working Group to assist in Plan development.

The following outlines the basic duties and possible membership of a task force such as an Agricultural Area Plan Working Group. Obviously local circumstances may require modification.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL AREA PLAN WORKING GROUP (AAPWG)

#### **Duties**

The AAPWG is the task force charged with creating a draft Agricultural Area Plan. This will include:

- creating detailed terms of reference for plan development;
- reporting, periodically, on progress to the Council / Board:
- ensuring necessary inventory work is completed;
- outlining longer term plan monitoring needs:
- coordinating the completion of work by outside agencies, ministries and consultants:
- undertaking a consultative process as part of the plan's development; and
- oversee the final draft Agricultural Area Plan.

#### Membership

Membership on the AAPWG will vary depending upon local issues but may include:

#### Example<sup>6</sup>:

- (1) local government planning staff; (1 or 2) - other local government staff - building inspector, - approving officer, or - environmental manager as appropriate; (1) - member of the Economic Development Commission (which may be the EDC's agricultural representative, if available); (2 or 3) - representatives from the agricultural community (potentially drawn from an Agricultural Advisory Committee or local Farmers' Institute, where these exist); (1) - local (non-farm) representative; (1) - ALC planning officer; Provincial
  - (1) MAF regional staff;
  - Agri-Team (1) - MELP - (if environmental issues foreseen); and
  - (1) MOTH (if transportation issues foreseen).

(10 to 12)

In addition, the Working Group could be supplemented by:

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and other Provincial representatives, if issues warranted their involvement;
- Federal government representation, depending upon issues identified or land use activities in the plan area (e.g. border crossings or airports under federal jurisdiction)
- a first nation representative if the first nation's land or interests may be affected; and

Although a possibility, this example does not include, local government elected officials or Agricultural Land Commissioners as members of an AAPWG.

The Agricultural Area Plan Working Group Con't.

- additional local citizens if issues or identifiable community interests required representation.

The working group membership would blend local and Provincial representatives and government and non-government persons. The size of the working group may range from 8 to 14 members but some representatives may not be required to attend all work sessions. For example, a MOTH representative may choose to attend only those meetings in which transportationrelated matters are considered.

Local government staff will have a particularly critical role in providing continuity during plan development, adoption and implementation. Another key role for local staff is to ensure linkage with elected officials and other departments within the local government structure.

#### Consultative Process

The make up of the AAPWG itself is designed for inclusion of a variety of interests in the process of plan development. However, the composition of a single group of perhaps a dozen individuals cannot, with confidence, "tap" into the input, feelings and aspirations of all interests in the community. There will undoubtedly be other groups and individuals who can make a valuable contribution to the plan's development if provided the opportunity.

There are several different methods that can be employed in developing a broader understanding of the community's vision for the future and how issues affect differing groups and interests. However, each plan development process, in the end, will have to choose the most effective means of furthering the consultative process.

The following represent a number of different consultative means that the AAPWG may undertake to contribute to the development of the plan:

- survey farmers in the plan area to identify issues important to the farm community;
- survey sample populations within the plan area on particular issues;
- identify bona fide interest groups within the plan area and maintain contact through the plan process (examples: a local farmers' institute, ratepayer group, wildlife organization);
- develop support literature explaining the process, issues and purpose of the plan and request input;
- develop a slide and/or video presentation to highlight background material and explain issues;
- publish an "Agr. Plan Newsletter" during the duration of the planning process to inform the public of the progress of the plan's development and seek input at critical stages in the process;

The Agricultural Area Plan Working Group Con't.

- establish a movable display highlighting the draft plan, to be available at
  events and locations throughout the community (open houses, local
  government offices and agricultural fairs); and
- ✓ undertake a series of focus group workshops with a mix of interests to discuss planning issues. (The Township of Langley effectively used a series of all day workshops in the development of the Langley Rural Plan.)

#### Cross Boundary Planning Process

This model is based upon the AAP planning area being fully confined within a single jurisdiction. This may not always be the case. Where a cross boundary planning process is initiated the initial work of the interagency committee will, by necessity, be reported to (both/all) local governments involved in the process and the development of the basic terms of reference and creation of the AAPGW will require joint action. In addition the reporting function of the AAPWG will also be to the councils or boards involved. In the case of cross boundary AAP's, the local government and possibly the local non-governmental representation on the Working Group will require modification.

#### 2. Agricultural Area Plans and ALR Reviews

There are several different ways in which the ALR can be reviewed. Individual landowner applications represent one, albeit rather haphazard, method of modifying the Reserve. There have also been many area specific ALR reviews, some associated with the Commission's former "enhanced fine tuning programme". On other occasions, processes have been initiated in advance of OCP updates.

From 1974 to the end of 1996 the ALR was physically altered by over 219,000 hectares.<sup>7</sup> Many ALR reviews have been joint processes involving one or more local governments and the ALC. "Block" applications by local governments normally follow a joint ALR review and this has accounted for over 70% of all land excluded from the Reserve.

Much of the ALR has been reviewed over the years and there are several well-established means of review without using the AAP process. The key reason is that the energy and resources needed for the Agricultural Area Plan might be absorbed by the ALR review process. Furthermore, the primary intent of the AAP is to develop a positive set of policies in a "problem / issue" solving format. An ALR review is a much narrower process. A simple rule of thumb - if you are still questioning the integrity of the ALR, you are not ready to plan positively for agriculture's long term future.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the process of developing an Agricultural Area Plan should *not* be used to undertake a major review of the ALR.

Provincial Agricultural Land Commission, <u>Agricultural Land Reserve Statistics</u>, <u>January 1</u>, 1997, Table A-2. (Exclusions = 113,294 ha.; Inclusions = 106,015 hectares to January 1, 1996)

If you are still questioning the integrity of the ALR, you are not ready to plan positively for agriculture's long term future.

Collection, Presentation, Analysis, and Retrievability...

critical elements of inventory work to ensure the continuing usefulness of the information base.

However, minor fine-tuning is possible. An AAP process, as outlined below, involves detailed planning studies and inventory work. Through the course of completing this work, some relatively minor areas may be inappropriately designated in the ALR or require inclusion into the Reserve. Where these situations are discovered, they should be brought to the Commission's attention for consideration prior to the draft plan being finalized. Where the Commission, by resolution, agrees to consider a modification of the ALR, the draft plan can reflect this reality. On the other hand, where the Commission does not concur with a suggested change to the Reserve, the plan should protect the integrity of the ALR and ensure policies support the agricultural use of the land in question.

#### 3. Planning Studies and Inventory

As in any planning exercise, a background study and inventory work will be required for the development of an Agricultural Area Plan (AAP). The collection of information forms the foundation of all planning studies and inventory work. Planning studies provide the technical backdrop for policy development and provide familiarization of the planning area in terms of its physical, social and economic makeup. A background study should summarize the history of the area and outline the evolution of the community as a means of assisting in determining future trends. The study should furnish a clear understanding of the perceptions and visions of members of the community and identify and prioritize issues important to the area. When planning for an area predominantly in agricultural use, a planning study and associated inventory will help provide:

- an historic overview of the planning area;
- a description of the community's vision for the planning area;
- a general description of the physical make-up of the plan area including a more detailed profile of the agricultural land base;
- an analysis of the area's land uses, human activities and resource values and their relationships;
- a comprehensive understanding of the state of agriculture its historic development, current farming activity, its social, land use and economic role in the planning area and larger region and an identification of problems, opportunities and issues impacting the industry (particularly those associated with urbanization);
- a documentation of critical environmentally sensitive features and habitats;
- an analysis of the impact and appropriateness of current policy and regulation;
- an outline of legislative and non-legislative tools for resource management as well as programmes of other government and regulatory bodies affecting the planning area;
- an identification of broader issues and opportunities within the plan area;
   and
- strategies and policies aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the farm sector and enhance land use and resource compatibility.

Agriculture should be the key, but not the only focus of a planning study associated with an Agricultural Area Plan

A fundamental principle of the AAP is to plan for agriculture from the standpoint of "agriculture forever". This might be viewed as stating the obvious if it were not for the fact that land use planning has often been approached from a very different philosophic position. Considering farming as an activity without end turns on its ear the otherwise selffulfilling prophecy of agriculture's eventual demise.

#### a) A Focus on Agriculture

There are a number of approaches that may be taken for the completion of studies and inventory work. When undertaking an agricultural area plan, a question arises as to whether policy should be founded upon a focused agricultural study or a more comprehensive planning study.

In some cases a decision may be made to complete a focused agricultural study and develop an agricultural strategy which can act as a foundation for a subsequent agricultural area plan. Such an approach is quite legitimate and can provide a very clear view of the farmed land base and issues important to the agricultural community for later policy development.

However, any defined agricultural planning area, despite a predominance of farming and ranching, will invariably have several other land uses and resource issues that must be taken into consideration. For this reason the emphasis of this section of the report is on undertaking a more comprehensive planning study in the context of an agricultural area plan. The importance of the planning study will be the consideration at one time, and in a balanced fashion, of all factors important to the development of policy within the planning area. However, due to the nature of the area under study, agriculture will form the clear focal point, and this is reflected in the Land Use Inventory Guide to follow.

As a fundamental underpinning of the AAP process, agriculture should be recognized as the legitimate *highest and best use* of the farm land resource. Equally important, agriculture should form the context within which policy is developed and issues are resolved.

One of the primary reasons for defining a specific agricultural planning sub-area is to identify agricultural issues and seek solutions that will enhance compatibility between land uses, preserve the resource base and ensure a long term home for a vibrant farm sector. A key product of a planning study and inventory work is a full understanding of the land base, agricultural activities, other land uses and resource values in the plan area and an appreciation of the relationships between differing uses and resources in the plan area.

#### b) Surveys and Focus Groups

The establishment of an Agricultural Area Plan Working Group ensures the representation of key interests in the actual development of the draft plan. Consultation with the constituents of a planning area following the development of a draft plan is common practice. A number of consultative approaches are outlined under the discussion of the AAPWG (Page 13). However, as part of a planning study, and prior to drafting plan policies, residents of the community should be given the opportunity to provide their insights into the study through the use of surveys, participation in focus groups and other means.

The Township of Langley effectively used a municipal- wide random survey to assist in determining key issues important to the people of the community prior to embarking on the Langley Rural Plan. In the case of the Delta Agricultural

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Consideration should be given, at the beginning of the plan study and inventory phase, to have a session to familiarize everyone, particularly the non-farm members of the AAPWG, with agriculture in the planning area. A tour could include an agricultural overview by MAF, review of ALR application activity and Commission policies by the ALC representative, and on-farm visits organized by farm representatives of the AAPWG.

See also: Chapter 6, for further discussion on involving the farm community in planning processes Study, an effort was made to interview all farm operators<sup>8</sup>. Their input provided detailed data regarding farm management practices, statistical information and an opinion profile concerning issues important to the farm community. Where other definable interest groups may be apparent within a planning area, a survey of these groups would also provide useful insights. Naturally the size of any particular group will determine the survey method (interview, mail or phone etc.) and the feasibility of conducting a 'total population' survey or a sampling technique.

Focus groups, either representing particular interests or mixed groups asked to consider specific issues, are another method to engage local citizens at the time of the planning study. The Township of Langley, in developing its Rural Plan, held a number of day-long focus group workshops where representatives of several interests (local citizens, government and other institutions) were brought together to discuss issues. As an introduction to the workshop and as a means of focusing discussion, Langley staff produced an informative slide show illustrating some 'facts & figures' and providing a visual overview of the plan area.

Less effective at the plan study stage, but with the potential to generate community interest, would be the use of *open houses* or the mailing of *informational material* about the planning exercise in which comment and input are solicited.

Regardless of the method, tapping into the general population and key interest groups within the planning area can, of course, provide valuable input into a planning study. As in the *Delta Agricultural Study*, it should be regarded as standard practice to include the participation of members of the farming community in background studies associated with the development of an Agricultural Area Plan.

#### c) Involving the Farm Community

In developing an inventory of farm operations, considerable base information can be obtained from a variety of traditional land use inventory techniques and air photo interpretation. However, where feasible, one-on-one interviews with farm operators, observing normal measures of confidentiality, can greatly enhance the data base, confirm and update existing information, yield invaluable insights into issues important to the farming community and help shape future policy. If possible, a 'total population' survey should be undertaken if feasible.

Other sources of information may include local farm organizations<sup>9</sup>, the B.C. Agriculture Council, and other provincial farm organizations, as well as Agriculture Canada, MAF, the ALC and Statistics Canada. In many communities local museums or historical groups can provide insights into past farming activity. Also, many local histories have been written which may offer a portrait of agriculture's past.

In total, approximately 85% of Delta's full-time farm operators, managing about 6,100 hectares of farmland, participated in the survey. In doing so, the farm community made an invaluable contribution to the Delta Agricultural Study.

In the case of the <u>Delta Agricultural Study</u>, representatives of the Delta Farmers' Institute formed the majority of the members of the Study's Steering Committee which authorized and helped develop the survey of farm operations.

## Involving the Farm Community in Survey Work: Some Suggestions

- Involve and seek the cooperation of the local farmers' institute, agricultural
  advisory committee and other local farm organizations at an early stage.
   Discuss the overall planning study, and the purpose of the survey, and request
  the organization's help to review the survey and design the questionnaire.
- Provide farm operators with pre-interview information (through local farm organizations) about the planning study and its importance. This is important to gain input from the farm community and identify issues, ensure a full and accurate understanding of agriculture in the area and help shape subsequent plan policy. The confidentiality of all information collected concerning individual farm operations should be made clear.
- If feasible, the survey of farm operators should be conducted 'away' from the busiest periods of farm activity.
- If possible, engage members of the farm community to help conduct interviews and assemble data.
- Talk to some of the long-time farm operators in the area. They can provide valuable insights into how agriculture has evolved in the area.

#### d) Inventory

During plan development or update, it is important that a relatively comprehensive inventory take place. Simply put, an inventory represents a recording of the past, a snap shot of the present and a glimpse into the future. The inventory should represent the resource heart of the planning study and as such, act as a fundamental building block to enhance an understanding of the planning area, identify key issues and act as a foundation upon which to develop plan policy and subsequent regulation. Besides assisting in plan preparation, inventories will also form the information bench mark for future monitoring of the plan.

The inventory should be able to provide a summary of the community's history—when did settlement begin, how has the area's economy evolved, when did farming first begin in the area? What role does agriculture play in the fabric of the community? What regulatory mechanisms (Federal, Provincial and local) affect land use in the planning area? How is the area's economy changing? What are the major economic activities in the region and what role does agriculture play in the region's overall economy? The inventory should provide insight into these and a host of other questions.

As a land use, agriculture is often in a state of change - from season-to-season and from year-to-year. In some cases these changes may be quite subtle and in others relatively dramatic. However, agriculture in transition does not represent a change in basic use. Planning studies should document the changing face of agriculture and subsequent policy should recognize and accommodate change

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe"

John Muir<sup>10</sup>

Quote from: Steiner, F., Ecological Planning for Farmland Preservation, Washington State University, 1981, p. 48.

and diversification rather than oppose this normal evolution within farming and ranching areas.

Land use inventories and the documentation of relevant statistical data will vary between planning areas. Enough data must be collected to complete relevant analysis but too much information of questionable value can create a situation where 'the forest can't be seen for the trees'. A degree of selectivity will be necessary.

It may also be appropriate to identify specific sub-areas within the larger defined planning area. This may take into account physiographic differences (floodplain vs. uplands - one area may experience drainage concerns that the other does not) or concentrations of specific types of farm activities. For example, while the entire agricultural area in the Creston Valley may be defined as an agricultural planning area, the farmlands of the floodplain and the upland areas of Erickson/Canyon/Lister may be identified as a distinct agricultural sub-area. Pockets of rural residential development may be defined in a similar fashion. Data collection should be sub-area sensitive. By doing so, the identification of area-specific issues, unique to a particular area, will be enhanced. When defining agricultural sub-areas, members of the local farm community should be consulted for their input.

Volunteers, although often overlooked, can provide assistance in the completion of data collection. Community volunteers, while providing potential cost savings, may sometimes be more knowledgeable of local circumstances than municipal staff or consultants, particularly in the collection of farm related data.

For the purpose of comparative analysis, there will normally be advantages if the inventory is completed at once rather than in stages. As mentioned above, the Provincial and federal levels of government should be prepared to assist as sources of information. As discussed below, the availability of planning grants and the potential for specific funding support for agricultural land use surveys and technical investigations can be critical in the completion of planning studies, inventory and analysis.

Presentation of material in an easily understood manner using a combination of text, statistics, maps, photos and various graphic techniques all have their place. Besides the 'housing' of inventory data within a published background planning study, other means to communicate the study findings should also be considered. Video or slide presentations and the production of a summary booklet or brochure of key findings for broad distribution will each be of value during the period of plan consultation and adoption.

While the *analysis* of data represents a latter step in an inventory process, it is a very critical step and requires consideration at an early stage particularly where cross tabulation of information is involved. <sup>11</sup> Data collection and presentation should be objective and unbiased. However, it can be anticipated that the final report, following inventory analysis, will offer opinion, determine planning implications and provide recommendations based upon the findings. Recommendations, while the forerunner of subsequent plan policy, should appear in a distinct section of the inventory or as a separate report.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Similar to the introductory farm tour suggested for AAPWG members at the start of the plan study process (page 17), the presentation of the study findings to elected officials could be combined with a farm tour developed by local farm organizations.

For example, if it is discovered that specific lands are being taken out of agricultural production, determining why this has occurred may only be clarified through an understanding of relationships associated with landownership patterns, urban pressures, agricultural capability, parcel size or perhaps the influence of Federal trade policy on certain commodities.

If everything is indeed connected to everything else, the planning process should make these connections explicit. The first step in making connections is to analyze how the inventory elements relate to each other. The following inventory guide identifies a collection of somewhat isolated 'bits' of information. The analysis should draw this information together, make connections and determine cause and effect. Wherever possible there should be a geographic referencing of information collected. Besides providing a general understanding of the planning area, the inventory analysis should identify issues and form the technical basis to effectively deal with these issues.

Until it is updated, the information collected during an inventory should remain as an information touchstone for decision-makers and policy advisors following plan adoption.

GIS:

"... is a decision support tool, not a decision-making tool."

D.W. Brown
Strategic Land Use
Planning Source
Book,

Regional Context Statements The retrievability of information collected and developed through the inventory is particularly important to ensure the product has a sustained life and value. Care should be taken in the storage of information, ensuring data compatibility, the use of consistent map scales and in documentation and labeling to allow an ease of review, reuse and updating of material. Besides the need for elected officials and staff to use inventory material on an ongoing basis, the information collected should also be available to assist businesses and other landowners in making personal land use decisions. This 'after plan use' may influence presentation of material to enhance its usefulness. Every inventory must be tailored to meet local circumstances and no two planning studies will necessarily assemble the same base data. However, in determining those elements to be included within an inventory, consultation with adjoining jurisdictions is suggested to enhance inventory compatibility for the purpose of sharing information and being able to aggregate data on a regional basis.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): The use of computer technology has emerged as a key tool to record, analyze, present and enhance the retrievability of inventory work. As indicated in Strategic Land Use Planning - Source Book, "...although GIS is not an essential input to strategic land use planning, it is an extremely valuable and powerful planning tool." A detailed discussion of the application of GIS systems in planning for agriculture has not been provided within this document. However, Appendix 8 includes an excerpt from Strategic Land Use Planning that provides some GIS basics and its key uses.

#### e) Relationships With Other Planning & Regulatory Bodies

Any official community or sub-area level plan (AAP) should, as part of a background planning study, identify relationships with broader regional influences to ensure that local planning priorities and regional goals and policies associated with overall growth strategies, servicing, parks, recreation and the environment are mutually compatible.

With the passage of the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act* there is a statutory requirement to include a "regional context statement" in an official plan. The planning study should outline local and regional relationships and form the basis for such a statement.

Within any planning area there may be a number of branches of the Provincial or Federal governments<sup>14</sup> and other organizations (e.g. school districts, irrigation or water districts) that have a bearing on land use decisions through legislation that

<sup>12.</sup> Steiner, F., Ecological Planning for Farmland Preservation, Washington State University, 1981, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, D.W., Strategic Land Use Planning Source Book, March 1996, Commission on Resources and Environment, Victoria, B.C., p. 96.

<sup>14</sup> Appendix 14 & 15 provide a listing of federal and provincial legislation administered by MAF and Agriculture Canada respectively.

Planning studies should highlight pertinent policies of Provincial, Federal and other organizations they administer and associated policies and programmes. As part of the planning study it will be important to consult with these agencies and determine how these factors influence the planning area and policy development. With agriculture being the prominent land use in the planning area, it will be particularly important to assess impacts on agriculture.

Provincial and Federal ministries are also potential sources of information when undertaking planning studies and the study will in turn be beneficial for these agencies. One of the key, non-legislative components emerging from the 'Strengthening Farming in B.C.' initiative is a commitment by both MAF and the ALC to work directly with local governments in a "team" approach during planning processes and bylaw updates where agriculture is involved. (See: "Agri-Teams" - Chapter 6, page 13)

Developing a stronger focus on agriculture within local planning processes will be a learning experience for all involved. Over time, engaging the provincial "agri-teams" should provide valuable input by being able to draw upon their exposure and involvement in similar processes in other areas of the Province. This could be particularly important in the completion of planning studies and inventory work.

For example, consultation during the planning process with other levels of government, improvement districts, school boards, etc. is important to ensure that a high degree of policy and programme consistency is achieved. The planning process should be seen as a venue to build partnerships and gain mutual respect. The process should also be regarded as a two-way street. While federal and provincial policy may affect and should, where appropriate, be recognized within the adopted plan, the planning study and adopted plan policies may also influence senior government policies within the planning area.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

MAF continue to develop material, modeling and documentation to assist local governments in the undertaking of planning studies and inventory work within agricultural areas. This information will identify sources and availability of information, approaches to data collection within the farm community, the use of geographic information systems well suited to the collection of data within agricultural areas, the most appropriate air photo and map scales for geographic referencing, and other information pertaining to collection and analysis. This information can also assist local governments at the initial stages of planning studies and inventory work leading to the development of agricultural area plans and the updating of OCP's, and could have application during the development of regional growth strategies.

The objective, in the long run, is to gain mutual respect, commitment and consistent policy implementation among various levels of government. The comprehensive local government plan can act as the glue to bind various land use policies together and provide the foundation of a shared vision of agriculture's future.

"...the District of Pitt Meadows has undertaken a project in cooperation with BCMAF to compile computer-based land-use data to help test and evaluate various planning scenarios along the Agricultural Land Reserve and urban boundaries. Development of a prototype is underway which will serve as a model for supporting other local governments in planning for agriculture."

Strengthening Farming News, Spring 1997, Page 5

Following is a check list of some of the features that may be included in a land use inventory geared particularly to an agricultural landscape.

#### LAND USE INVENTORY GUIDE

#### 1. Population:

- total
- age structure /gender
- urban / rural / farm
- population, trends and projections

#### 2. Topography / Physiography

#### 3. Climate

#### 4. Geology:

- Soil Types (1) ←
- Soil Erosion Potential
- Sand, Gravel and Mineral Deposits
- Aggregate Extraction
  - Active (in or out of ALR)
  - Future (planned)
  - · Former (rehabilitated) extraction area

#### 5. Hydrology:

- Watershed
- Wetlands and Bogs
- Groundwater resources
  - Well sites (location, quantity & quality)
  - Impacts of urban development on groundwater resource
- Quantity and quality of water available for irrigation
- Areas where ditches are used for irrigation
- Aquifer recharge areas
- Surface Water & Drainage Patterns
- Areas of high impact from urban storm drainage
- Water Licences

#### 6. Resource Capability:

- Agricultural
  - Land suitability for agriculture and soil management (2) ←
- Forestry
- Fisheries
- Mineral
- Recreational
- 7. Ecological Resources /
  Environmentally Sensitive Areas (3) ≤

- 1 For the Province as a whole and for many specific regions of the Province, detailed soils analyses have been completed and are available, including soil management handbooks.
- 2 As Gary Runka has stated, "From a land use planning perspective, land suitability and soil management information are important to fully understand the agricultural resource... Specific crop suitabilities and land management requirements can have a wide range of planning implications. These include size of land holdings, drainage and irrigation services, and compatibility with adjacent uses." (See: Runka, G., Agricultural Issues Official Community Plan Issue Paper No. 3, Township of Richmond, 1984, page 17.)
- 3 A number of local jurisdictions have undertaken an analysis and detailed mapping of environmentally-sensitive areas (ESA) within their communities. Where this information is available, relationships should be drawn between agricultural activities and environmentally sensitive features. ESA mapping is emerging as a key land use planning tool and will be of fundamental importance in establishing "whole farm" management plans to conserve and manage wildlife and other landscape features in a manner mutually sensitive to both the environment and agriculture.

- 8. Urban Suitability / On Site Waste Disposal Suitability
- 9. Historic / Archeological Features
- 10. Scenic Vistas / "Special Places"
- 11. Jurisdictional & Land Use Boundaries:
  - Municipal / Regional District
  - OCP & Zoning designations (4) ←
  - Development Permit Areas
  - Urban growth boundaries
  - Agricultural Land Reserve
  - School District
  - Diking, Water & other Improvement Districts
  - First Nations (in or out of ALR)
  - Forest Reserves
  - Park or Wildlife Areas and Ecological Reserves
  - Floodplain & other Hazard Lands
- 12. Land Tenure:
  - Private
  - Government (5) ←
    - Provincial
    - Federal
    - Regional District
    - Municipal
    - First Nation
  - Institutional
  - Farmland Ownership and Leasing Patterns (6) ←
    - · owner: live on and farming parcel
    - owner: live on but not farming parcel
    - owner: not living on but farming parcel
    - owner: not living on or farming parcelowner: live on parcel and lease to others
    - owner: not living on parcel but leasing to others
    - · live on and lease parcel
  - do not live on but lease parcel
  - Private and Public Restrictive Covenants (7) ←

4 Beyond a simple mapping of plan and zoning designations, current land use policies and regulations should be critically examined to determine their impact on farming. With the recent (1995) passage of the Farm Practices Protection Act and the development of Provincial farm standards this will be even more important. The inventory and planning study will provide a heightened understanding of local agriculture and as such represents an important opportunity to examine the appropriateness of existing regulations.

- Documenting government or other institutional ownership of agricultural (ALR) land, its use, lease programmes, policy objectives etc. should determine whether ownership by government of farmland is making a positive contribution to the farm community (leading by example), has non-farm objectives or is acting contrary to farming interests.
- 6 In order to understand more fully the impact of farmer vs. non-farmer owned land within the farm community (ALR), comparisons should be drawn in terms of such things as location, parcel size, type and level of agricultural use, agricultural capability, lease or rental activity, non-farm uses and ALC application history. (Tenure list adapted from: French, B., Vancouver Urban Fringe Land Tenure Study, 1983.)
- 7 Covenants can limit or influence agricultural use.

# 13. Land Use:

- Vegetative Cover
  - Forest
  - Brush
  - Hedgerows / Windbreaks / Shelterbelts (8) ←
  - Wetland
  - · Orchards & Plantations
  - · Land in Crops
  - Unimproved / Improved Fields

8 Windbreaks and Shelterbelts are particularly important in areas such as the Peace and Interior. Care should be taken when planning highways that existing features are not disturbed.

# 13. Land Use Con't

- Stream courses and water bodies
- Open Space / Wildlife / Ecological Reserves
- Agriculture:
  - Location of agricultural infrastructure, support services, processing industries and other agribusinesses.
  - Agricultural travel patterns, special needs & seasonal shifts and relationship to urban travel patterns
  - Impediments to field access or the movement of farm vehicles, harvesting machines etc.
  - Air photo analysis of agricultural land use change the last 20 years in 5 year intervals.(9)
  - Potential future changes in agricultural use (MAF specialists may be able to assist in predicting future trends that may result in changes in agricultural land use.)
  - Regional drainage, irrigation, diking and associated facilities.
- Non-Farm Land Use in the ALR (10) ←
- Rural Land Uses: (Hobby Farm / Ranchettes / Rural Residential):
  - · Summarize historical development
  - Relationship to:
    - plan & zoning designations
    - ALR (in or out?)
    - equestrian land uses
    - urban growth boundary
  - Possible or probable future status urban or permanent exurban?
- Urban (11) ←
  - · Residential
  - Institutional
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
- Transportation
  - · Roads / highways
    - location / type (Prov. highway, arterial, local etc.)
    - element recognized in a network plan
    - ALR consumed by rights-of-way
  - Undeveloped road rights-of-way (location & area of land consumed in ALR)
  - · Roads with historic or scenic value
  - Railways
  - Utility lines / services
  - Trails / greenways
  - · Ports, ferry terminals & airports
- Land fills, toxic waste sites, abandoned mining or extraction sites
- Sources of potential noise pollution.

9 An analysis of this type will provide a portrait of the 'near - past' evolution of agriculture. From a land use point of view, is agricultural activity increasing or decreasing? This information can be combined with production information (where available) to discover, for example, if more or less of a commodity is being produced on more, less or approximately the same amount of land base.

10 See: Chapter 9, page 44, "Non-farm Uses in Agricultural Areas" for suggestions concerning a detailed inventory of nonfarm uses in the ALR.

11 Within the planning area there may be a need, in some cases, to differentiate between institutional, commercial and industrial uses that predominantly serve urban vs. rural / agricultural populations. General stores, community halls and rural schools are examples of the latter type of use serving the rural community and therefore are not strictly an urban use.

### 13. Land Use Con't

- Parks / Recreation / Tourist Facilities
  - by type
  - location in or adjacent to the ALR and farming activities
  - estimate of annual visits / level of use

# 14. Parcelization:

- Categorize by size of legal parcel (12)←
- Parcels less than 0.8 ha. (2 acres) in size in ALR
- Bare Land Strata development
- Historical Trends (e.g. reconstruct pattern of subdivision (location / size) for the past 10 to 20 years)
- Land Value (analyse land values based on recent sales for land in and out of the ALR for different locations, distance from ALR boundary / urban area, tenure, parcel size and soil capability ratings)
- Detailed review of parcelization within the ALR and relationship to zoning bylaw minimum lot sizes
- Parcels theoretically possible with existing density provisions non-ALR
- Analysis of non-ALR residential capacity

# 15. Farm Units:

- Full-Time / Part-Time Commercial Farm Operations (13) ←
- Total Area Farmed
- Land in Crops / by type
- Differing Crop or Farm Use Combinations (by planning area / by operation)
- Crop and Agr. Use Combinations (by operation)
- Improved land for pasture or grazing
- Unimproved land for pasture, grazing or hay
- All other land / water
- Number of Dwellings & type (principal vs. farm help etc.)
- Farm Buildings & Structures
- Structural building envelopes
- On-farm infrastructure improvements (e.g. fencing, areas of sub-surface drainage & ditching, irrigation facilities and manure storage structures, etc.)
- Availability of an irrigation source or linkage to a regional drainage system
- Types & size of farm operations
- Full-Time vs. Part-Time Farms
- Farm Size (categorized)
- Area of building coverage of key farm types (e.g. greenhouses, poultry, swine)
- Commercial vs. non commercial (hobby) farms
- Non-Soil Bound Agriculture (type and location)
- Organic Farms (14) ←

12 If possible effort should be made to standardize parcel size inventories to allow comparative analysis. It can be anticipated parcel categories will change depending upon location.

# Suggestion:\*

- ≤0.4 ha (urban)
- > 0.4 ha. to < 0.8 ha.
- 0.8 to <2.0 ha.
- 2.0 to < 4.0 ha.
- 4.0 to < 8.0 ha.
- 8.0 to < 28.0 ha.
- 28.0 to < 52.0 ha.
- 52.0 to < 73.0 ha.
- 73.0 to < 97.0 ha.
- 97.0 to <162.0 ha.
- ≥162.0
- \* Modified from Statistics Canada
- 13 As opposed to hobby farms, part-time commercial farms, that may come in many forms such as small organic operations, specialty crop production, community agriculture or subsistence farming, should be recognized as legitimate contributors to the agricultural economy. There may be several reasons for part-time farming including size of land base, commodity type and value, personal decision, start up operations, land costs and inability to lease additional land. A number of different definitions might be used for defining full and part-time farms. For example: Part-time may be defined as those operations in which there is (a) one or more non-farm incomes and the farm income accounts for at least one third of the total family income or accounts for \$10,000 or more in gross farm sales. It is suggested that local MAF staff may be able to assist in defining part and full-time farming in a particular area.
- 14 The identification of organic farms is important to ensure programmes such as the removal of weeds along adjoining roadways is done in a manner that will not adversely affect the farm operation

# 15. Farm Units Con't:

- Commodity Type (dairy, poultry, grapes, beef feed lot, cranberries, ranch, raspberries, mixed operation etc.)
- Estimates of Livestock populations
- Direct Farm Marketing / Value Added Operations
- Parcelization:
  - · Number of Parcels
  - · Size of Parcels
  - Vacant Parcels
  - · Multiple Parcel Farm Units
- Farm Unit Parcels Unencumbered by a Residential Use (by size of parcel)
- Owned vs. Leased or Rented land
- Farm Units made up of non-contiguous parcels (15) ←
- Does the farm unit have sufficient land base?
   (Are difficulties experienced in attaining additional land base due to land values or the unavailability or unreasonable lease or rental terms)
- Value of agricultural production and its importance to the local economy (Capital value, total gross farm receipts, farm expenses)
- Farm units with an annual gross farm income of \$10,000 or more (16) ←
- Secondary Income (home occupation / bed & breakfast / farm or ranch vacation)
- Farm employment (permanent / part-time)
- Age of farm operator

# 16. Agricultural Interface:

- Linear Extent of Agricultural Interface
- Land use relationships along interface (Example: an orchard abutting urban residential)
- Land in agriculture or a compatible use within
   0.5 km of a farm unit boundary (17)
- Existing Buffering (type)
- Undeveloped urban reserve areas abutting the ALR (18) ←
- Road Endings abutting the agricultural interface
- Analysis of Conflict Potential (19)
  - Low
  - Moderate
  - · High
- Identification of existing situations of "high conflict" requiring relatively short term mitigative action.
- Documentation of underutilized, derelict and idle farm land near or between urban areas.(20)

15 Farms made up of multiple parcels, some of which are not contiguous, are relatively common in areas with generally smaller parcels or where the leasing of land is particularly apparent. Where 'split' farm units are common this can increase the necessity for the movement of farm vehicles and in turn can have transportation planning implications.

16 \$10,000 gross farm income is often used to help define a bench-mark between commercial and non-commercial (hobby) farms

- 17 Mapping those farm units with a "built in" compatible use buffer of 0.5 km or more will quickly illustrate those units with a greater potential for some degree of land use conflict.
- 18 Undeveloped areas adjacent to the ALR that are planned or have a reasonable probability for future urban development afford clear opportunities for the application of "edge" policies aimed at mitigating urban /rural conflicts at agriculture's interface.
- 19 Determining the potential for future conflict will be important in any "edge" planning exercise to determine those sections of the interface where a detailed land use inventory is necessary as a precursor to the development of an edge plan or policy package.
- 20 Evidence of previously used but currently idle or underutilized farmland can provide evidence of the land use dynamics that has been referred to as the "impermanence syndrome". (See A.C. Nelson, Preserving Prime Farmland in the Face of Urbanization: Lessons from Oregon, APA Journal, Autumn, 1992.) This syndrome is manifested by disinvestment in farming, sale of farms to non-farm interests and shifts in crops to less labour intensive uses such as pastures. Official plans, if not active vehicles in support of agriculture and farmland preservation, can act as agents promoting the impermanence syndrome.

# 17. Agricultural Land Reserve

- Amount of land in the ALR
- Non-farm use in the ALR
- ALC decision-making process (re: subdivision / non-farm land uses) (21)
- Changes to the ALR (21)←
  - exclusions & inclusions (quantitative / qualitative)
  - location
  - proposed / current
  - · reasons for modifications
  - proposed vs. current use of former ALR land
- Potential future modification to ALR (reasons)

# 18. Housing in the ALR:

- Principal Farm Dwellings
- Dwellings for Farm Help
- Parcels with more than one dwelling
- Non-Farm Dwellings
- Mobile Homes
- Nodal Residential Development (22)←

# 19. Agriculture Markets:

- Importance of local agriculture (in plan area)
  relative to agriculture in the region and province (23) ←
- Importance of local agriculture in supplying local market needs
- Identification of opportunities to expand share of local markets
- Identification of agricultural market niches unique or important to plan area
- Estimate of the relative importance of farmers' markets, farm gate sales and value-added as marketing techniques
- Role agriculture may play as a positive contributor to area tourism

- 21 The Agricultural Land Commission can assist with a summary of previous ALC decisions and changes to ALR within planning area.
- 22 Nodal Residential Development in the ALR may be defined in a variety of ways (e.g. 10 or more residential units together having an average density of less than one unit per 0.8 ha. (2 acre). The location of residential nodes in farm areas is important to document due to the potential for conflicts with adjoining farm operations and the possible need for appropriate setback and buffering policies.
- Sources such as: MAF statistical resources and Statistics Canada Census of
   Agriculture: Small Area Data should assist in making comparisons with other geographic areas.

# 4. Financial Assistance

While the concept of sub-area planning is not new, for most municipalities and regional districts, undertaking a planning exercise focused on its agricultural land base will be largely a novel approach. A successful planning process that is designed to be an expression of the community's future land use vision as well as a problem solving vehicle, will require an enhanced understanding of local agriculture, knowledge of issues facing the industry and how the planning area relates to other land uses, resources and the environment.

Emphasis has been placed on the need for detailed planning studies and inventory work to act as foundations upon which to build an agricultural area plan. While the development of official community and sub-area plans has been and should continue to be essentially a local government responsibility, both the ALC and MAF are committed to gradually develop improved support products (such as guides, etc.). Moreover, a greater proactive engagement of local planning process by MAF and the ALC and a certain degree of improved technical support can be anticipated. However, the need for planning studies, inventory work, consultative processes, workshops and special studies, will all have an impact on resources. Focused planning exercises will require the assignment of local government staff who in turn may require further assistance. This may come in several forms such as short term help through co-op or other student employment programmes, technology enhancement or the hiring of consultants.

Currently the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing administers a coordinated planning grant programme. In particular, the "Community

Planning", "Regional Growth Strategy Planning" and possibly the "Infrastructure Study" grant programs may provide an opportunity for funding assistance in the development of agricultural area plans. The Ministry has guidelines for eligibility and application requirements, with each application considered on its own merits. 15

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food also has a

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food also has a multi-year programme - "Partners In Progress" - which is another potential cost-sharing mechanism. However, Partners In Progress was not developed with community planning in mind. Rather, the programme provides the means for members of the farming, fishing and food sectors to help themselves by working with others to develop ideas that will solve problems, increase competitiveness and create new markets. One area in which the Partners In Progress funding may be of benefit is where, as part of the planning programme, an agricultural strategy is developed to enhance markets and solve issues and problems facing the industry. <sup>16</sup>

Ministry of Municipal Affairs Planning Grant Programs - 1997

- ✓ Infrastructure Planning
- ✓ Community Planning
- ✓ Special Provincial Planning
- ✓ Restructure Planning
- ✓ Regional Growth Strategy Planning

# RECOMMENDATION:

That the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, ALC and MAF, and in some cases the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, jointly consider the provision of planning grants and other sources of funding that will assist local governments in the pursuit of focused agricultural planning.

Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of providing funding to support:

- planning studies and inventory work;
- special studies related to agriculture's sustainability and environmental considerations;
- · cross-boundary planning exercises;
- the preparation and adoption of more agriculturally focused OCP's and AAP's;
- · edge planning exercises; and
- the review of the agricultural components of zoning and rural land use bylaws and development of farm bylaws.

<sup>15</sup> A series of informative guides are available from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on each of the grant programmes.

<sup>16</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has published an informative booklet, "Partners In Progress", that provides further details regarding the programme.

Despite existing planning and other grant mechanisms, we are now experiencing a period where grants are getting scaled back. As a result, it may be an opportune time to reconsider how local governments and the Province can best work together to meet joint objectives. For example, a new grant structure geared to focused agricultural area planning may be worth considering with a sliding scale of funding based upon the amount of ALR in the planning area. Regardless of the appropriateness and availability of current grant programmes, it is clear that enhanced planning studies and inventory work alone will demand a strong local and provincial commitment accompanied by appropriate resources.

# 5. Plan Content<sup>17</sup>

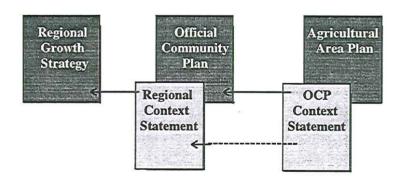
As is the case with planning studies and land use inventories, the actual content of a plan document will vary from area to area and plan to plan. While it is not possible to develop a firm blueprint for the content of an agricultural area plan, there are several elements that can be itemized and will be common to most plans. The following provides some key considerations when developing a plan's content.

# a) Legislative Backdrop

• The Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act:

Under a regional growth strategy, agriculture and urban containment policies can be stated which provide a regional context for official community plans and in turn AAP's. If a regional growth strategy and a municipal OCP overlap, the municipality must include in their OCP a "regional context statement". The statement addresses the relationships between the OCP and the strategy. <sup>18</sup>

Because the agricultural area plan is adopted by bylaw in a similar fashion as a community-wide OCP, the AAP should also include, as part of its content, an acknowledgment of the OCP regional context statement as well as an "OCP context statement". In doing so, a thread of consistency can be drawn from the regional growth strategy to the OCP and onto the sub-area AAP. This will "force" consideration of the linkages between the broad based OCP and the more area specific AAP and will ensure that the AAP is developed in the context of broader community and regional objectives instead of in isolation.



See also: Chapter 4, page 16 and Chapter 5, page 5 for further discussion of Regional Growth Strategies

### RECOMMENDATION:

In the spirit of the regional context statement and to provide consistent linkages, an AAP should consider providing an official community plan context statement that would outline relationships between the OCP and AAP, and acknowledge the OCP regional context statement.

<sup>17</sup> The discussion of 'Plan Content' primarily relates to the development of Agricultural Area Plans (AAP)

The regional context statement must be prepared within two years of adoption of the regional growth strategy and would be subject to a five year review (see Section 866 - Municipal Act)

# • The Municipal Act

The outline of official plan content within the *Municipal Act* highlights those matters that may and shall be included within a community plan. A sub-area plan, such as an agricultural area plan, must observe the same content requirements as a broader based community-wide OCP. However, the underlying intent of an AAP is to act as a vehicle that provides greater focus, more detail and a strong orientation towards issue identification and problem solving, as well as providing for broad objectives and a vision of the future.

Despite being a sub-area plan, the AAP, once adopted by bylaw, has the status of an official community plan. For this reason Sections 876, 877, 878 and 879 of the *Municipal Act* (General and Required Content and Policy Statements of Community Plans and the Designation of Permit Areas, respectively) are particularly important in the development of any plan document.

Direct references to agriculture include:19

- The plan shall include statements and map designations respecting:
  - approximate location, amount, type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility uses;
- A plan may include *policies respecting the maintenance and enhancement* of farming on land in a farming area (ALR or area licensed for aquaculture) or other areas designated for agricultural use in the plan.
- A plan may designate *development permit areas* for the protection of farming;
- Where a local government includes in a plan a matter not regulated by the local government, the plan shall only state broad objectives (this provides an AAP with an added degree of flexibility).

# • The Agricultural Land Commission Act:

There are two elements of the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA) which have a bearing on the content of those parts of a plan involving land in the ALR.

- Part of the Commission's mandate is to encourage municipalities, regional districts and others to support and accommodate farm use of agricultural land in their bylaws, plans and policies. (ALCA Sec. 10(1)(d))
- A bylaw of a municipality or regional district that adopts a regional growth strategy, an official plan, zoning or rural land use bylaw or any other bylaw respecting land use must ensure the plans and bylaws are consistent with the ALCA, its regulations and orders of the Commission. Any element of a bylaw that is inconsistent is of no force or effect. (ALCA-Sec.47)

Section 877(1)(b)

Section 878(1)(c)

Section 879(1)(c)

Section 878(2)

Plan Content, Policies and Development Permit Areas

With the enactment of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act,, Division 41 of the Municipal Act requires Ministerial approval of those portions of zoning and rural land use bylaws prohibiting or restricting farm use. Also Section 884 of the Municipal Act (Effect of OCP) requires regulatory bylaws to be consistent with the OCP. Hence, care must be exercised in preparing OCP / AAP provisions to ensure these do not lead to regulatory bylaws which will conflict with the FPPA or if there is a conflict, concurrent amendments to appropriate bylaw provisions are undertaken.

Early consultation and the proactive involvement of the Commission during plan preparation is important. These provisions in the ALCA, together with the necessity to refer plans that apply to land in the ALR to the Commission for comment, (Municipal Act Sec. 882(3)(c)) ensure linkage between the provisions of the ALCA, its regulations and ALC policies with plans and bylaws. This is particularly relevant in the case of a plan's land use policy and other bylaw provisions affecting agriculture. Consultation with the Commission and a review of Commission policy during plan preparation is a key to achieving consistency between the farmland preservation programme and plan policies.

# b) Background

As previously discussed, development of a plan will normally require the completion of a relatively comprehensive planning study involving extensive inventory work. It is suggested that the planning study, survey findings, inventory results, analysis and any visionary work completed prior to the actual preparation of the plan be compiled in one or more background reports or other electronic information presentation. This will prevent the plan from being over burdened by detail.

However, the plan document itself should provide the reader with a "feel" for the planning area, a clear understanding of key elements, issues and important findings of the planning studies. This material should be provided in summary form. An executive summary of the planning study may provide the basis for the background section of the actual plan. There are several factors that should be considered for inclusion within the agricultural area plan's background section.

# BACKGROUND SECTION - POSSIBLE INCLUSIONS -

- Historical overview of human settlement.
- A general description of the physical make up of the plan area including a more detailed profile of the agricultural land base and its uses.
- The state of agriculture challenges & opportunities, strengths & weaknesses.
- A summary of the rural / agricultural economy and its position within the economic fabric of the larger community and region.
- Historical overview of the ALR.
- Environmental and other resource values identified.
- Community profile: an understanding of the "people" make up of the planning area History of population growth and projections, a description of the community's "lifestyle" and its vision of the future.
- Besides agriculture, summarize other present land uses and attributes of the plan area such as:
  - recreation
  - ' transportation
  - commercial / industrial
  - residential
  - institutional; and
  - "special places" (e.g. historic sites, trails, scenic vistas)
- Summary of key issues.

# Key for an APP will be the goal and objective statements defining agriculture's unequivocal and long term place in

the community.

# c) Goals and Objectives

The overall goals of the plan should provide the reader with a strong sense of the vision of the future, major themes and an overview of the land use concept that the plan is attempting to pursue. The objective statements will, in turn, provide greater substance to the broader goal statement(s). Obviously in an agricultural area plan the goals and objectives should have a strong orientation towards agriculture centred on the protection of the land base and a commercially viable industry. Key for an agricultural area plan is the role of the goal and objective statements defining agriculture's unequivocal and long term place in the community. The fulfillment of this purpose within the AAP can hardly be overstated.

Agriculture will, however, not be the exclusive purview of the plan's goals and objectives. Important also will be the interrelationships between agriculture and other land uses, the protection of other resource values and overriding environmental considerations, as well as other factors considered important within any particular plan area.

# d) Plan Policies

Policies should be driven by the long term vision contained within the plan's goals and objectives and be particularly responsive to the critical issues identified in the planning study and inventory work completed in preparation of the plan.

Plans and bylaws can provide an important bridge between local and Provincial policy. For this reason it is important that plan policies be developed in a manner cognizant of regional and provincial policy which may be mutually supportive of the goals and objectives being pursued by the plan.

Policy consistency is not, however, a one-way street. It is quite possible that a local planning process may point to the need for modifications in regional or Provincial policy. In fact the *Municipal Act* makes provision for broad comment within plans on matters not necessarily regulated at the local level. To lessen confusion for landowners within the plan area, striving for policy consistency is a particularly important objective.

The diversity of both B.C.'s agricultural land base and the industry itself will result in challenges in one part of the Province that may not have to be dealt with in another. For this reason the following list suggests common policy themes, however, every plan must be tailored to identify and deal effectively with local issues.

# PLAN POLICIES - POSSIBLE INCLUSIONS -

- Context statements related to the OCP, other sub-area plans and the regional growth strategy.
- General agricultural policies, particularly those related to the ALR, agricultural infrastructure and agricultural impact assessments.
- Identification of critical portions of agriculture's interface for the purpose of ensuring greater land use harmony or identifying the need for a specific "edge" planning programme.
- Land use designations and policy:
  - . relationship to the land use concept / goals & objectives,
  - . residential land use policy,
  - . subdivision policy,
  - other land use policy: e.g. commercial, industrial institutional, park & recreation.
- Issue identification.20
- Environmental considerations, resource management and relationship to environmentally-sensitive area policies and hazard conditions where apparent.
- Policies respecting hydrology flood prevention, drainage and the quality and quantity of water available for irrigation.
- Economic policies in the rural / agricultural area.<sup>21</sup>
- Transportation and Servicing.
- Development Permit Areas and associated guidelines.
- Special 'after-plan' studies, if required.
- Policies related to the land uses of adjoining jurisdictions.<sup>22</sup> These will be particularly important where joint agricultural area planning processes are initiated by two or more jurisdictions.
- Other external jurisdictional issues (e.g. other Provincial policy matters)
- Other Policies.23
- Plan implementation and regulatory instructions.<sup>24</sup>
- Plan updating and monitoring.

- See: Chapter 9
  "Housing in the ALR":
- The ALC Basics
- Dwellings for Farm Help
- Siting & Size Pages 14 to 27

See: Chapter 9, "Subdivision of Agricultural Land" Page 28, and Appendices 9, 10 & 11.

See: Chapter 9, "Transportation and Utility Corridors" Page 48.

<sup>20</sup> It will be important to provide focus on the key issues identified during the plan study and inventory process. This should provide a core focus of policy development. For example, if the provision and management of water for irrigation is of critical importance in achieving a sustainable agricultural industry, this should be identified accordingly and be reflected in the policy section dealing with agricultural infrastructure.

<sup>21</sup> The policies related to the rural economy within the Langley Rural Plan are worth specific attention.

Where a plan may affect an adjoining jurisdiction, the *Municipal Act* (sections 882 and 883 Plan Adoption Procedures) requires the referral of draft plans to adjoining jurisdictions.

<sup>23.</sup> Within any plan there may be specific policies that are difficult to categorize under an existing heading. Such policies could be simply grouped under "other policies".

There are a number of techniques that can assist the implementation of a plan. However, given that plans and bylaws are inexplicably linked (the plan providing the policy foundation upon which detailed regulatory bylaws are built), it is important that the plan provide clear direction for the updating of zoning bylaws as key instruments of implementation.

# e) Mapping

It is difficult to predetermine all elements important to a given agricultural plan area that should be depicted in map form or the most suitable scale of mapping. Inventory and analysis will demand a relatively detailed map scale but within the actual plan the map scale may be largely determined by balancing an ease of publication and reproduction with clarity of presentation. The information being illustrated may also demand differing map scales and levels of detail. Other elements that should be considered are the types of information and map scale used within the jurisdiction's OCP and other sub-area plans to allow for an ease of comparative analysis between planning areas. However, the land use designation map should be of a scale that allows the plan reader a clear understanding of the designation on a parcel by parcel basis. To achieve this level of detail may require the use of fold-out maps, or 'pocketed' fold-out maps.

The completion of planning studies readily available to the public lessens the necessity of providing a large number of maps depicting information within the actual plan document. However, there will still be several factors that will lend themselves to a map format within an AAP.

# PLAN MAPS - POSSIBLE INCLUSIONS -

- The planning area juxtaposed on a map outlining the jurisdictional area of the municipality or regional district, to provide an understanding of both the general geographic setting of the plan area within the community and its relative size.
- The ALR should be depicted either on the land use designation map itself or on a separate map of the same scale as the land use designation map to permit an ease of comparison.
- Land status: private vs. public (Crown Provincial, Crown Federal, first nations, municipal & regional district).
- Current land use including key transportation features.
- Floodplain and areas of hazardous conditions.
- Features related to the areas hydrology.
- Key resources: agricultural capability, mineral deposits, forestry (Crown forest reserves / Forest Land Reserve), environmentally sensitive areas and designated environmental features e.g. wildlife reserves.
- Future "study areas" e.g. the determination of critical portions of the agricultural interface as an indication of follow-up, detailed planning exercises that may be necessary.
- Depiction of Development Permit Areas
- Zoning designations overlaying planning area
- Land Use Designation Map.
- Transportation Network Map if not included as part of the land use designation map.

# 6. Policy Inconsistency

Central to the development of a planning process founded upon partnerships and shared responsibilities is the building of consensus and avoidance of policy

# Agricultural Land Commission Act: Consistency With Plans and Bylaws

"Every municipality and regional district must ensure that its bylaws are consistent with this Act, the regulations and the orders of the commission.

A bylaw that is inconsistent with this Act, the regulations or an order of the commission is, to the extent of the inconsistency, of no force or effect."

Agricultural Land Commission Act Section 47(2 & 4)

inconsistencies. However, given the number and variety of jurisdictions that have significant farm areas, policy differences may sometimes arise. It is important that the forms of potential inconsistency be understood and the means be found to resolve these differences. Besides inconsistencies with provincial legislation, effort should be made to avoid the following forms of inconsistency during plan development.

# a) Between Plans and Bylaws Within a Single Jurisdiction

Because plan development and adoption procedures remain clearly a function of local governments, inconsistency between a local government plan and an implementing bylaw should be rare. However, it is possible that a Council or Board may adopt an agricultural area plan but decide not to update existing zoning or other bylaws to achieve consistency with the plan. This decision may be the result of a lack of commitment to all aspects of the agricultural area plan policies, due to the changing make up of elected officials on a Council or Board, or the result of intervening pressure from citizen groups resulting in a reluctance to amend bylaws for the purpose of implementing the plan.

However, given the effort to develop and adopt an AAP, all means necessary to implement the plan should be pursued.

### b) Between Neighbouring Jurisdictions

The consultative process and joint development of agricultural area plans in cross boundary situations should provide considerable impetus for policy consistency between jurisdictions. Beyond the positive influence of joint processes and goodwill there is no absolute requirement for policy consistency between jurisdictions. However, as noted on page 9, a source of frustration among farmers is differing agricultural policy and regulation between adjoining jurisdictions within a single agricultural area.

# 7. Plan Adoption / Implementation

Within the hierarchical structure of plans and bylaws, an agricultural area plan represents a more detailed sub-area official community plan adopted by bylaw of the Council or Board. As such, the AAP must maintain consistency with the overall official community plan of the jurisdiction. Plan adoption procedures for

the AAP are the same as those of an OCP as outlined in the *Municipal Act*.<sup>25</sup> Adoption procedures are largely established to provide the legal context and requirements for the final review and public consultative process.

The necessity of a public hearing, the need to refer the draft plan to the Agricultural Land Commission if the plan applies to land in the ALR (*Municipal Act* - Sec. 882(3)(c))<sup>26</sup> and the need to refer the plan to adjoining jurisdictions if the plan affects these jurisdictions, are common to all plan adoption procedures. Only in the case of regional districts must a plan be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval prior to adoption (*Municipal Act* - Sec. 883(1). In each of these cases, the review and consultation process of plan adoption is further extended and clarified.

Following is a summary of the key steps in the plan adoption procedure. It is important to recognize that while the legal requirements of plan adoption must be observed, this does not limit a local government in the manner in which it may choose to undertake a plan review leading up to the formal adoption process.

# SUMMARY: KEY STEPS IN PLAN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Complete the draft of the AAP by the Working Group (see above) with the assistance of staff and consultants or in combination.
- Council / Board reviews draft Plan making adjustments as considered appropriate.

By way of introduction of the draft plan, council / board may choose to undertake public open houses / information meetings and informal consultation with adjacent jurisdictions and interested agencies and ministries. This represents an important point in the process to ensure the community is aware of the plan and to seek input that may influence changes prior to the more formal public hearing. Given the agricultural focus of the plan, a particular effort should be made to link with local farm organizations to present the plan and seek comment.

- After making any necessary adjustments to the draft plan following the "stage one" review, Council / Board gives 1st reading and the Plan is examined in conjunction with:
  - the capital expenditure program; and
  - the waste management plan and economic strategy, and is referred for comment to:
  - adjoining jurisdictions as necessary; and
  - the Agricultural Land Commission if ALR land involved. (Municipal Act Sec. 882(3))

Stage One
Plan Review

Public consultation at this stage is important to make persons aware of the plan and seek input for the purpose of affecting appropriate change.

Stage Two
Plan Review

Adoption procedures - Sections 882 (municipalities) and 883 (regional districts) Provisions for the conducting a public hearing - Sections 890 to 894.

Where the Commission has been involved in the plan development process as a member of the AAPWG, the review of the draft plan by the Commission should be greatly aided.

Stage Three
Plan Review

Plan
Adoption

Plan Implementation 🖼

- Following consideration of input from "Stage Two" review, necessary amendments to the draft Plan undertaken by Council / Board.
- Public Hearing (Municipal Act Sec. 882(5) & 890-894)
- Council / Board make appropriate amendments to the Plan in consideration of public hearing comments.
- Referral of Plan to Minister of Municipal Affairs (in the case of regional districts) (Municipal Act Sec. 883(1)).
- Third Reading and Plan adoption by bylaw of Council / Board (Municipal Act Secs. 882 & 883)
- Possible Implementation Measures:
  - amendments to zoning, farm practices and other bylaws;
  - development of capital works program;
  - development of a detailed policy package as part of an "Edge" planning process (see Chapt. 8);
  - consider appropriate 'partnership agreements' between the local government and Provincial ministries and agencies to assist realization of the Plan's objectives;
  - Council /Board and the Agricultural Land Commission consider any appropriate delegation of decision-making power under the ALC Act (Section 23)
- Design and implement a Plan monitoring programme.
- Consider scheduling of future Plan review.

# 8. Plan Monitoring

If a land use inventory provides a snap shot at a particular point in time, sequential monitoring of land use, population and other activities after plan adoption ensures the picture stays in focus. It is important, through time, to determine if the goals, objectives and policies of an official plan are being achieved. Monitoring key indicators is an important means of determining land use change, establishing trends and judging the overall effectiveness of the plan. Monitoring change can determine if the plan's vision and reality are becoming more consistent or more skewed. As is the case with any planning area, recording and understanding the dynamics of change in an agricultural setting is an important basis for considering policy adjustments to deal effectively with issues affecting the farm community.

An extensive checklist of features that may be included in a land use inventory has been provided earlier (pages 22 to 27). As a starting point, the inventory checklist should provide the basis for determining those elements that need periodic monitoring. Many factors, particularly physical features such as topography, climate, geology and hydrology (where unaffected by urban or other development), will remain relatively stable through time and will not require continual monitoring. Other information, such as population, changes to the built environment and the evolving use of agricultural land are factors that can be subject to relatively rapid change over only a few years.

Monitoring plan performance can form the basis of gradual plan amendment to meet changing circumstances.

"Another conclusion from sub-regional planning was that continuous monitoring and adjustments of policy were better than the preparation of new plans every five years or so. Some of us tried this out... with considerable benefit."

Andrew Thorburn
Past-President, Royal
Town Planning Institute,
Planning Week, 19
September, 1997

In determining key factors to include in a monitoring programme, links should be drawn to plan policies to better determine plan performance. For example, if an effort is being made to focus agri-industry in a designated central location in the agricultural community, this is a factor that can be periodically monitored to determine if the objective is being achieved. Information generated as part of a plan monitoring programme may also be of value to others such as those involved with service delivery and the economic development commission. External agencies will often have a keen interest in the information collected and in turn may be able to offer assistance in data collection. Consultation with these other interests will be worthwhile when launching a monitoring programme.

A summary of key factors or indicators that may be tracked to monitor land use change and activity in agricultural areas is provided below.

The timing of monitoring may depend upon the availability of information particularly if it is being drawn from an external source such as Statistics Canada. On the other hand, locally generated information such as building licenses, subdivision activity and applications involving the ALR could be monitored on an annual basis. While monitoring will provide a key input at the time of updating an official plan, in most cases monitoring should not await the next plan update but provide a more regular, on-going check of plan performance in order to provide for ease of comparison through time.

# - Monitoring -Agricultural Planning Areas

- 1. Population (general) / Farm population
- 2. Agricultural employment
- 3. Residential land uses (farm / non-farm)
- 4. Set asides for wildlife or other environmental purposes
- Location & amount of land base consumed by transportation facilities (including undeveloped road rights-of-way)
- 6. Other non-farm land uses (type / area / location / change)
- 7. Number of farms / type
- 8. Structural (agricultural) development
- 9. Land in farm use
- Land previously in farm use / additional land in farm use (relative to previous monitoring)
- 11. Land in crops / type
- 12. Land in the ALR & changes to the ALR (quantitative / qualitative)
- 13. Agricultural interface and other farm-related complaints (location / type)
- 14. ALC decision-making process (subdivision / non-farm land uses / utilities)
- 15. Parcelization change
- Capital (farm) value
- 17. Total gross farm income
- 18. Farm Expenses
- 19. Amount of land rented or leased / owner operated
- 20. Farm Units location / size
- 21. Agricultural infrastructure (drainage / irrigation, etc.)
- 22. Agricultural service and industrial support facilities (type/location)
- 23. Location of organic farm operations.

# **SUMMARY**

Too often the concept of land use planning has been almost exclusively linked with *urban planning* for the developed or built environment to the direct demise of agriculture. For various reasons, the ties between settlement and resource planning have been poorly drawn. Municipal and regional planning should not stop at farming's edge. Rather, there is a need for greater focus on planning within agricultural areas. The interface should represent a special area of dual urban / agricultural policy development. The farm community doesn't need or want *urban* planning. Policy development in farm areas must be based on a clear understanding and sensitivity to issues important to the farm community and a commitment to deal effectively with these issues. Policies and regulations in farm areas should be developed from a distinctively agricultural perspective. At the same time, planning for agriculture cannot be divorced from settlement planning any more than urban planning can occur without consideration of resource and environmental implications.

The Township of Langley was one of the first, largely urban municipality, to intentionally focus a planning exercise on its agricultural area with the adoption in 1993 of the *Langley Rural Plan*. The Plan is a form of "operational" level plan and in many respects resembles an AAP. Both the approach taken in developing the Plan and several of the key policies have been highlighted below as a form of appendix to close out this chapter. Other local governments that have completed or begun land use studies or plans focused on their farm areas include: Delta, the municipalities of the Saanich Peninsula, Kelowna, Surrey, and Maple Ridge.

# AN OPERATIONAL PLAN IN ACTION



# Runal Plan

# LANGLEY

In July 1993 the Council of the Township of Langley adopted the Langley Rural Plan. The Plan was a breakthrough document. Compared to other land use plans, the Langley Rural Plan was far more responsive to agricultural issues. At several points the plan was extremely innovative and its contents, goals, objectives and policies, as a package, were far more comprehensive than any other official planning document applied to the ALR up to that time.

The Plan's foundations include the *process* followed to complete the plan, the decision to *focus* a major land use planning exercise exclusively on the rural, mostly agricultural, area and the *philosophical commitment* of Langley Council, staff, participants and general public. The result was to build a land use vision of the community's rural areas that pro-actively supports the agricultural sector.

The 1993 Langley Rural Plan stands apart from other planning exercises due to a combination of its process, focus and philosophical commitment to proactively support sustainable agriculture in Langley

The Township of Langley is a classic example of a community with a robust agricultural sector facing the pressures of rapid urbanization. Between 1971 and 1996 the Township's population went from 22,000 to over 80,000. Langley rests within and on the eastern edge of the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Canada's third largest and most rapidly growing metropolitan area. Looking at Langley agriculturally, the development of a focused rural plan may not come as a surprise. The Township, in 1996, had total annual gross farm receipts of over \$150 million (second among all B.C. municipalities), over 13,000 hectares in farm use<sup>27</sup> and 77% of the Township in the ALR. Yet, despite their agricultural credentials, urban challenges in communities like Langley tend to dominate planning agendas. What was different in this case was that Langley decided to tackle its rural / agricultural issues while 'standing' firmly on the rural side of fence. This perspective was fundamental to the development and success of the plan.

"Through the rural planning process the township is taking an active approach to rural planning, focusing as much planning attention on the rural area as on urban communities."

> Paul Crawford Plan Canada, March, 1993, p. 17

The suggestion within this report, to place far greater importance in the plan delivery process on the operational, 'neighbourhood' level Agricultural Area Plan was inspired by the approach taken by the Township of Langley. The Langley Rural Plan clearly offers a foundation upon which to build.

The March 1993 edition of *Plan Canada* includes the article, "Preserving Rural Character in an Urban Region - Rural Planning in the Township of Langley", written by Paul Crawford, a planner with the Township who was central to the development of *Rural Plan*. Mr. Crawford's article is recommended as further reading. Following is a brief highlight of the process and contents, both of which emphasize the importance of a focused rural planning exercise.

<sup>27</sup> Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Agriculture Profile Data - British Columbia, Table 7.

# The Planning Process - Langley Rural Plan:

- 1. Council held a workshop in 1988 to explicitly consider rural issues.
- 2. In 1989 Council resolved to undertake a rural plan.
- 3. Planning staff worked with a former chair of the Agricultural Land Commission to develop the basis of a rural plan early in 1990.
- 4. The Langley Tomorrow Program, completed in 1990, was undertaken to develop a corporate mission statement. A survey was conducted to understand community values. It was discovered that the rural nature of the community was important to all residents.
- 5. An agricultural land use inventory underway for a portion of the rural area was extended by Langley to include all of the planning area.
- 6. A first draft of a policy document was completed in the form of a "proposal for discussion".
- 7. A series of workshops were held with a wide range of rural stakeholders to discuss the draft policy document.

"The primary goal of the plan is to enhance agricultural viability through protection of agricultural land, preservation of larger lot sizes and creation of policies to encourage the agricultural industry." <sup>28</sup>

- 8. The plan's development was assisted by the involvement of the Economic Development Commission which in turn undertook a study of the agricultural industry in the Township to determine how to support and enhance the farm sector.
- 9. Public open houses were held to obtain feedback on the Plan proposals.
- 10. The Agricultural Land Commission and staff assisted during the process through attendance at workshops and by reviewing plan drafts, which included several staff, Council and the Commission meeting in various combinations.
- 11. The draft Rural Plan was finalized and another round of open houses were held.
- 12. A public hearing and adoption of the Langley Rural Plan took place in 1993.

The Rural Plan benefited from a very open process. While more common in regional district planning efforts, the focus on the rural portion of the community was ground- breaking in a municipal context. The approach did not permit rural/agricultural issues to become dominated by urban concerns, and was responsive to a majority of the Township's citizens - both rural and urban. This progressive planning programme was undertaken within the scope of the *Municipal Act* but was successful largely because of the philosophical commitment and leadership of Langley's staff and Council.

# Plan Highlights - Langley Rural Plan:

# Vision

Perhaps most importantly was a change in the overall vision of the long term future of Langley's agricultural land base. The Langley OCP had formerly maintained the concept of the rural area as equal parts rural residential and agricultural. The *Rural Plan* retained this vision only for a portion of the rural area in the form of a "Small Farms / Country Estates" designation which applies substantially to lands close to urban areas and significantly parcelized.

<sup>28</sup> Crawford, Paul; "Preserving Rural Character in an Urban Region", Plan Canada, March, 1993, page 20

# Policy Harmony

The Plan also establishes, as policy, the protection of the agricultural land base and enhances the viability of agriculture by the inclusion of policies to encourage the industry. This basic policy direction moves local government policy into close harmony with that of the Province.

# "Agriculture/Countryside"

The majority of the plan area and ALR within the Township was placed in an "Agriculture/Countryside" designation within which, "...agricultural uses and considerations shall have priority over non-agricultural uses...". Most of the "Agriculture / Countryside" designation formerly had a1.7 hectare minimum lot size. After adoption of the Plan the Zoning Bylaw was amended for these lands to an 8 hectare minimum lot size to thwart parcelization and lessen expectations of subdivision.

# **Buffering Policies**

It is relatively common for plans to contain a policy statement supporting land use buffering. However, more often than not, this has not translated into the development of buffering criteria ( where, when and what buffering techniques to apply). The Rural Plan, while not including a comprehensive "Edge Plan", does include several specific policies directed at increasing land use compatibility at the Township's lengthy agricultural interface.

# Agro-Service Centre

A centrally located Agro-Service Centre was designated to provide a location for commercial and industrial uses supporting the agricultural sector and to limit the dispersal of these uses in less appropriate areas throughout the ALR.

# Agricultural Awareness

The Plan takes a number of actions to enhance awareness of agriculture and living in a rural setting. A guide to farm gate sales is produced each year and Langley sponsors a booth at the PNE promoting the municipality's agricultural sector.

# Other Rural Uses

The Plan also recognizes other rural uses, expands recreational opportunities in areas largely compatible with agriculture and provides for limited commercial and industrial activities. The plan supports bed and breakfast uses and farm vacations. Policies protect watercourses and encourage good agricultural practices and conservation measures to minimize soil erosion. The Plan also recognizes the importance of heritage conservation, scenic rural roads and vistas. Importantly, non-farm use policies were developed from an agricultural perspective, consciously considering their impact on farming.

There are two other significant features of the Plan. The Rural Plan is seen only as a foundation for a more comprehensive rural planning programme to include: economic development initiatives, an environmental inventory, a trail and country roads program and more detailed rural area plans.

It is common for OCPs to contain broad supportive agricultural policies (consistent with the intent of community plans) that do little to identify issues, seek solutions or provide directly supportive policies to the agricultural sector. A second important feature of the Langley Rural Plan is a number of actions that need to be undertaken to support the agricultural industry. It is this type of "action" policy that clearly sets the

Langley Rural Plan apart from many other community planning efforts and further illustrates the benefits of an operational plan. As Paul Crawford has commented, "The plan goes beyond land use issues to identify

actions that the municipality and economic development commission can undertake to strengthen the rural economy."<sup>29</sup> He summarized these as follows:

# Typical OCP Policies

"To preserve and protect agricultural and forestry land resources"

"Encourage protection of agricultural land through support of the ALR and encouragement of continued farm use on agricultural land."

"The municipality supports the objectives of the Agricultural Land Commission to encourage the preservation of agricultural land and use providing it will not significantly hamper urban development."

# Action Policies - Langley Rural Plan:

- investigate the feasibility of an agricultural demonstration centre;
- support the location or relocation of a university agricultural faculty in the Township;
- encourage the development of short agricultural courses in local educational institutions;
- promote public awareness of the economic value of agriculture (for example, posting signs advising of agricultural activities in the area, developing a list of farm operations offering farm gate sales and encouraging and assisting in the development of farm tours and visits);
- · investigate the feasibility of a farmers' market;
- develop an award system for innovative agricultural products, businesses and management;
- develop a program to promote leasing of land for agricultural purposes;
- publish a brochure with information of interest to new rural residents;
- encourage the Provincial government to have an agricultural extension specialist to assist new farmers and hobby farmers;
- · help to market the greenhouse and horse industries; and
- publish a newsletter dealing with issues of concern to rural residents.

Despite its considerable success, the Langley Rural Plan was a Plan that the Agricultural Land Commission could warmly endorse but not fully support. There remained some components of the Plan (including the extent of the Small Farms / Country Estate designation and the fact that not all land in the ALR was included in the rural planning area) that the Commission could not endorse. Having said this, it must be clearly recognized that on balance the Plan represents a major achievement in its sensitivity to agricultural issues.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Plan Canada, March, 1993, page 23

The Plan has made a fundamental adjustment in the long term vision of most of the Township's agricultural land. It provides for a number of directly supportive actions for agriculture and has moved local and Provincial land use policy into an era of mutual commitment to the preservation of agricultural land and the agricultural industry. Moreover, the Plan should also provide the foundation upon which the Commission and Township can enter into agreements for the possible delegation of decision-making power to the Township in specific circumstances.

Clearly, the Township's philosophic commitment, its open process, its focus on rural issues and supportive agricultural policies represent a major achievement and one that can be both emulated and built upon in other ways to improve the manner in which we plan for agriculture.



Greenhouse: Township of Langley

# Planning Along Agriculture's Edge

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# INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is particularly vulnerable at its point of interface with other land uses. Despite this, there has been a woeful lack of attention paid to the development of policies directed at enhancing land use compatibility and the security of agriculture's working environment at the interface. The lack of attention in establishing definitive urban / agricultural boundaries tends only to support, if not serve, the out-dated presumption that agricultural land is simply "urban land in waiting."

Together, the ALR and clearly defined urban growth boundaries will assure the integrity of the urban / agricultural 'edge', and provide a context for applying land use policy and design principles which lessen land use conflict. In many cases the urban growth boundary, when viewed from the urban side of the interface, is simply the obverse of the ALR. An outward adjustment of an urban growth boundary, if not directed away from agriculture, will translate into direct pressure on the ALR boundary.

As long as the urban growth boundary remains undetermined, unwarranted expectations of land use change will be raised. The importance of establishing urban growth boundaries should not be underestimated. Its importance goes far beyond edge planning. As stated in *Chapter 4 (page 26)*, establishing urban growth boundaries represents a basic ingredient in achieving farmland preservation and developing policies supportive of agriculture.

If high levels of compatibility and greater land use certainty are to be achieved, the agricultural interface must be recognized as a 'special' planning area requiring an intensive examination of current and future land use and the application of specific policies and physical works. An "edge" planning programme should be based on detailed inventory work, consultation and the development of a package of policies implemented through OCP's, sub-area plans (including agricultural area plans), implementing bylaws and other less formal means, particularly in the area of awareness.

Creative efforts to find practical solutions must first find a voice within land use policy and then find physical expression in the treatment of the edge between farmland and abutting uses.

Given its physiography, much of British Columbia has a unique land use planning challenge relative to many other areas. Agriculture often finds its home, and competes for space, in the same elongated mountain valleys as do many of B.C.'s urban settlements. This tends to contribute to a lengthy and often irregular line of interface between agriculture and non-agricultural land uses.

An agricultural area plan (AAP) represents a policy vehicle to examine in detail an area largely in farm use or with agricultural potential. An edge planning area should intentionally straddle the interface. The planning process and end products of edge planning should reflect the basic principle of *shared* responsibility for ensuring improved land use harmony.

In any effort to preserve agricultural land, the boundary of the ALR has consistently been the "hot spot" for applications as efforts are made to extend urban uses into designated agricultural lands. A fundamental task of the Provincial agricultural land preservation programme has been to reverse the

Urban Growth Boundaries

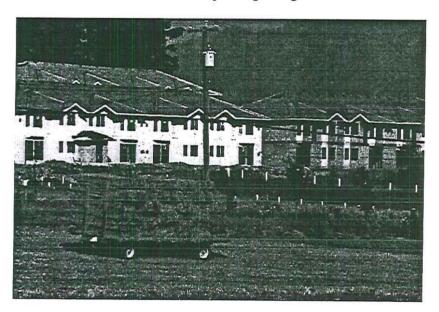
"...the agricultural interface must be recognized as a 'special' planning area..."

Edge planning should strive to improve existing situations and lessen the potential for future conflict as land use changes.

Edge planning should be based on the principle of "shared responsibility." historic assumption that it is natural and inevitable that the urban / rural edge will be breached and our foodlands will be continually compromised to accommodate urbanization. The only thing inevitable about this course of action is the ultimate destruction of the agricultural resource base and the industry that depends on it.

# CONFLICTS COME IN DIFFERENT FORMS

Any juxtaposing of differing land uses can lead to conflict. For persons living next to farms, complaints often centre around the periodic odour of manure spreading, background noise and odours from farm buildings, slow moving farm



vehicles on local roads, pesticide spraying, tree clearing to bring land into production and early morning or late evening operation of machinery.<sup>1</sup>

As the process of urbanization continues, more and more people are becoming out of touch with what constitutes normal and safe agricultural practices. We forget that farming is a business, that farmland is a working, evolving environment and not just green space. For example, during certain critical times of the year it is 'normal' for farms to operate for extended periods. At harvest time, "normal business hours" have little meaning to most farmers.

For agriculture, conflicts can take two broad forms and both are equally problematic.

The first is what might be referred to as "one-on-one" conflicts. For the farmer this will express itself in neighbour harassment, vandalism of machinery, fence damage, theft of crops (this is particularly prevalent in orchard areas), transportation conflicts associated with the movement of farm vehicles, crop and machinery damage as a result of the ad hoc disposal of everything from pop bottles to golf bags into farm fields, harassment of livestock, trespassing by hikers and operators of off-road vehicles as well as school children discovering that the shortest distance between home and school is through a farmer's field. These are all common problems for many producers operating near urban areas.

The second form of conflict can be more widespread. Examples include the effects of flooding from urban developments, runoff of road pollutants entering ditch systems used as a water source for farm purposes and the passing of restrictive bylaws directed at curtailing specific farm practices. One of the more celebrated cases of reactionary regulation has been the banning, by some communities, of traditional noise making devices by blueberry operators attempting to protect crops from bird damage.

"When glass from a broken bottle is discovered in a load of harvested peas the entire load must be rejected, resulting in a loss for the farmer of thousands of dollars."

Delta Agricultural Study Page 89

See Appendix 20 - "A Check List of Common Urban / Agricultural Conflicts"

Some local governments have used their zoning powers to prohibit specified types of agriculture, particularly those related to the raising of animals, even within the ALR. In doing so, newly proposed operations that may be the target of prohibitive regulations are forced to undertake lengthy, costly and uncertain rezoning procedures. All too often, restrictive local regulations are born out of a reaction to one bad operation. Throughout Canada there have been high profile cases of legal action against farmers through nuisance suits, often born out of a lack of understanding and appreciation of normal farm practices. These actions can devastate a farm operation. Sadly, such litigation has led to farms going out of business and even cases of farmer suicides. However, rather than penalize a whole agricultural sector with prohibitive regulations, other solutions must be sought that provide for a more balanced solution. (See page 28 "Right to Farm & A New Complaint Process")

Edge conflicts are not inconsequential. The rural / urban edge can be one of the most difficult, least favoured and highly challenging areas to farm due to the potential for "people" conflicts. If conflict persists and remedies are not found, a sense of `giving up' can emerge along the 'edge', resulting in a clear impression that an inevitable agriculture-to-urban land use transition is underway.

Some communities have attempted to deal with interface questions in a variety of ways. The Sunshine Coast Regional District has incorporated larger lot

# designations for non-farm lands next to the ALR boundary. The Township of Langley, in its Murrayville Plan, also increased the size of suburban residential lots next to the Reserve. The former and rapidly urbanizing municipality of Matsqui recognized how critical the treatment of the urban / rural edge was to the health of its agricultural community and completed a report entitled *Urban Rural Conflict Mitigation Techniques*. This initiative on the part of Matsqui was particularly useful when the ALC developed its *Landscaped Buffer Specifications* guide in 1993.

However, efforts to deal with the 'edge' have often taken the form of one-on-one 'single proposal' solutions. These are often implemented at the direct expense of agriculture, and have rarely taken a comprehensive approach. The Commission has had a long history of attempting to achieve buffering solutions when dealing with individual applications under the Agricultural Land Commission Act. However, this approach lacks comprehensiveness and is at best a 'hit-and-miss' process.

comprehensiveness and is at best a 'hit-and-miss' process.

Regrettably there have been cases of local governments approving residential subdivisions and road patterns or the provision of sewer lines along the boundary or through the ALR that appear to be conscious efforts to create instability and undermine the adjacent agricultural community. The infamous "road-ending", pointing like an arrow into the heart of the ALR, is the most vivid expression of a disregard for agriculture at the edge.

There is clearly a need for different and better approaches. One alternative is to define the interface as a separate focus of planning policy development. In doing so, existing and potential points of conflict can be identified and practical solutions implemented to avoid conflict and enhance the potential for greater land use harmony.

# A CHECK LIST OF COMMON URBAN / AGRICULTURAL CONFLICTS

Increasing the awareness and understanding of agriculture is a first step in attempting to find ways to lessen the potential for urban / rural conflict. Appendix 20 provides a check list identifying common conflicts experienced by members of the farm community. Some conflicts, such as the stealing of crops, will require a far greater effort be placed upon education and heightening an awareness of agriculture. In other cases the potential for land use conflict can be greatly reduced through a focused effort to develop sensitive land use policies and the application of buffering along agriculture's interface.

# AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Focus land management policy at the agricultural interface for the specific purpose of resolving and preventing land use conflict.

# OBJECTIVES OF PLANNING ALONG THE INTERFACE

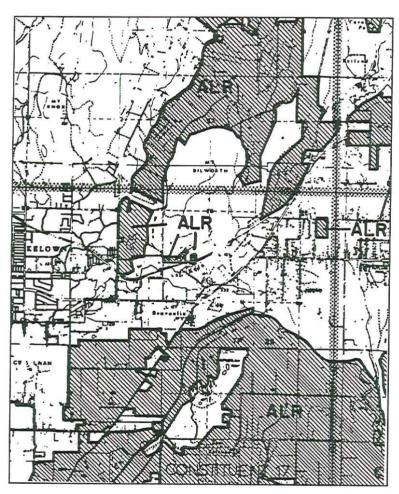
PLANNING THE EDGE.....

IS PLANNING FOR COMPATIBILITY AND PERMANENCE To enhance the compatibility between land uses.

In doing so, existing conflicts can be reduced or alleviated and future ones avoided. Consequently, the living and working environment for persons on both sides of the interface will be protected.

· To ensure the permanency of the "edge"

This is important for real and psychological reasons. It will add stability within the farm community and in doing so, make a direct contribution to securing a key part of the economic fabric of communities throughout British Columbia.



Kelowna is one of several agricultural communities with an extremely convoluted and lengthy agricultural interface. Kelowna is about 14 km wide and 26 km north-south but has an ALR "coastline" of over 260 km. - the distance from Vancouver to Merrit.

Some communities may have only minor areas of existing or potential conflict along agriculture's interface. These situations, however, are more often the exception than the rule. Even in less populated areas of the Province it is not uncommon to find a cluster of rural residential uses or an open space recreation use that can be a point of conflict.

In many communities the agricultural / non-agricultural edge can be exceedingly lengthy and made up of numerous differing uses abutting farmland. Kelowna, a rapidly growing community with highly capable agricultural lands and a long farming tradition, serves as an example. As the crow flies, the City of Kelowna is about 14 kilometres wide and 26 kilometres north - south. Yet its ALR "coastline", just within the City, is over 260 kilometres in length - the approximate distance from Vancouver to Merritt. Along its length are active farms, predominantly orchards, facing a wide range of different uses on the nonagricultural side of the interface. Each of these uses will pose different challenges and demand different solutions if compatibility and permanency at the 'edge' are to be achieved. There are, of course, many other communities in B.C. with a lengthy agricultural interface.

# RECOMMENDATION:

To find and implement practical solutions to 'edge' concerns, focused and comprehensive land use planning efforts are needed at the interface between farm and non-farm land uses.

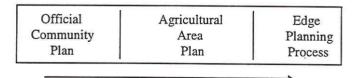
# **EDGE PLANNING**

There are a number of different types of land use plans adopted within the communities of British Columbia. The official community plan is, of course, the 'flag ship' planning document, but park plans, road network plans, neighbourhood plans and environmentally sensitive area plans are some of the different approaches taken to provide more focused land use direction.

While the interface may geographically represent an area not commonly considered for the application of detailed land management policy, it should be viewed as a distinct area for planning purposes. The edge planning area, while taking on some characteristics of a neighbourhood or sectoral plan, may utilize approaches common to road network plans because of its linear nature. This is particularly so in the assessment of impacts on adjacent land uses. The key difference in this linear plan is that the roadway will normally be replaced by the ALR boundary as the point of plan focus.

# The Concept of Edge Planning

- Edge Planning is viewed as a planning process directed at all or portions
  of the agriculture interface in a given jurisdiction, most often focused on
  the ALR boundary and identified through an OCP, agricultural area plan
  or separate study.
- The purpose of edge planning is to become familiar with existing and potential land use conflicts and identify practical means to heighten land use compatibility.
- The edge planning exercise is seen as a "process" and not the creation of an actual plan document. The planning process should lead to the development of a package of policies and recommendations that can be adopted by a local government and implemented through OCPs, sub-area plans, bylaws and other means.
- The edge planning process should focus on both sides of the interface with recommendations based on the principle of "shared responsibility" for the application of solutions. Consultation with landowners and groups that may be affected by edge policies is a critical part of the process.
- Local governments should design and manage the edge planning process.
   The actual planning exercise could be overseen by an agricultural advisory committee or a single purpose group appointed for this purpose.
   To the greatest extent possible, MAF and the ALC should provide technical assistance as requested.



AN INCREASING LEVEL OF DETAIL

Treating the interface as a distinct planning area and focal point for policy development, provides an opportunity to express policy at a level of detail that is normally not afforded in an official community plan. The relationships between an "edge planning exercise" and other plans and bylaws are further considered on page 19. Basically the package of edge policies will have an overriding character when dealing with interface / buffering issues by acting as the base for amending plans and bylaws and providing the impetus for other actions. The edge planning process, then, will serve to guide more detailed land use decisions associated with rezoning, development permits, subdivision layouts, densities, road patterns and the provision of other services as well as decisions related to land use change along the non-farm side of the edge.

The Farm Practices Protection (Right-to-Farm Act provides important new tools, including the designation of development permit areas and an expansion of the powers of approving officers to provide buffering. These measures, along with the potential for farm bylaws, will each assist in addressing interface issues. (See below, page 21 for greater detail) Accordingly, it will be even more important in the future to ensure that broader policies are developed to guide the application of these new implementing tools.

If an acceptable level of compatibility is going to be achieved, both sides of the interface will have a role to play. Effective edge planning will in the end be based on the principle of shared responsibility. A better understanding and a heightened awareness of normal farm practices and the fostering of good neighbour relationships will play an important role in achieving the policy objectives developed through an edge planning process.

# PLANNING THE EDGE - AN APPROACH

There are a number of approaches that could be employed in the development of edge policies. With experience, one can assume that in time the methodology will evolve and improve. However, the following outlines a number of key considerations.

# 1. Basic Principles

There are several basic principles that provide context for planning along agriculture's interface.

 The ALR Boundary is fixed and should form the focal point of edge planning.

An edge plan must be developed from the position that the ALR boundary will remain stable. To adopt any other position would undermine the underlying objectives of the planning exercises. As noted previously, moving beyond the preservation of agricultural land and ensuring a sustainable working land base for farming and ranching will require the establishment of urban growth boundaries. Planning for a permanent urban / rural interface will be considerably enhanced with the ALR and a defined urban growth boundary firmly in place and working in a mutually beneficial manner. Obviously, through time, there may be some refinements to the Reserve. However, after nearly twenty-five years and numerous ALR reviews and 30,000 thousand applications, it can be anticipated that future changes to the ALR will be fewer and fewer.

Edge planning must be approached from the perspective that nuisance and conflict can flow in two directions. In turn, resolution will demand a recognition of dual responsibility, require consultation, enhanced awareness and the building of partnerships.

• Both sides of the interface must be considered simultaneously.

There are numerous examples where land use conflicts can be traced to urban planning efforts that have literally turned their backs on agriculture. In developing lasting solutions, edge planning policies must be developed from a perspective that literally straddles the interface, considering simultaneously land uses and impacts on both sides.

· An edge plan must anticipate land use change.

In many cases land uses on either side of the interface are long-standing and change may be unlikely. However, change should be expected - and planned for. Agriculture is continuously evolving as are urban uses, with urban redevelopment and rural to urban land use conversion occurring on the non-farm side of the interface.

Agriculture is a growth industry meeting the challenge of providing food and fibre for a rapidly growing Provincial, national and world population.

Agricultural uses will change with time. To the greatest extent possible, edge planning should attempt to anticipate these changes. The industry itself and MAF may be helpful in outlining different commodity trends. Sometimes land along the farm side of the interface may not currently be in agricultural use. Edge planning should not ignore these areas. Edge policies should be developed from the perspective that one day this land will be farmed unless it has been subject to some long-standing alternative use or land allocation decision.

Land use change can occur more rapidly and dramatically on the urban side of the interface. An official plan will usually outline where future short and long range urbanization may occur. Road and servicing plans, along with park plans, will often signal where land use change might be anticipated along the interface. The best time to establish appropriate buffering policies is prior to, rather than after, urbanization.

• Solutions must come from observations and an understanding gained "in the field."

The edge plan must be developed from the "grass roots". Maps and airphotos will have their place, but a full understanding of current and potential edge problems will usually only be found on the ground, walking the boundary and talking to landowners individually and in groups. It is from this vantage point that the most reasonable solutions to deal with this highly variable, elongated planning precinct will be found. To effectively enhance compatibility, an understanding of the various types of agricultural operations along the interface must be understood because their level of tolerance will change. For example, a cranberry operation or orchard next to an urban residential use may experience very different impacts compared to a dairy farm. At the same time, different types of farm operations vary in their potential to affect non-farm neighbours.

• There is no single "right" way to buffer. Innovation may be the source of the best solution.

Edge planning policies must be 'customized' to meet local circumstances. There are no magical, pat solutions and 'best' ways to buffer. Land uses can change dramatically within just a few metres, demanding the application of new

Edge policies should be focused on both today's as well as tomorrow's concerns. A key to a successful edge plan will be in its ability to anticipate land use change.

Solutions...they reveal themselves very hesitantly in artificial light, and never enter airconditioned rooms."

> Wendell Berry The Gift of Good Land p. 49

approaches to achieve compatibility and secure a permanent edge. While experience and guidelines such as the Commission's *Landscaped Buffer Specifications* will provide useful advice, innovation may be the best source of solutions to deal with unique situations. As outlined on page 31, MAF and the ALC have identified, as a long term objective, the need to extend the Commission's earlier work and develop a comprehensive buffering guide.

 Agricultural land should not be compromised in applying buffering solutions.

When implementing land use policy along the edge, with few exceptions, solutions should make every effort not to compromise the agricultural land base. Besides agricultural land being a scarce resource, as David Hobson, past President of the B.C. Fruit Growers Association has remarked "farming was there first". This is almost always the case. One possible exception may be the "retrofitting" of the interface with the application of minor buffering techniques where urbanization has historically been built out to agriculture's edge with an absence of buffering.

• Consultation and the eventual "buy-in" of landowners along the interface is critical.

While some planning exercises consist largely of broad objectives, the edge plan needs to be a blueprint of practical solutions. For example, it could outline where fencing or landscaped buffering is needed, determine the density and form of development to occur next to the edge when land use change is being considered, and it may prescribe building setbacks on both sides of the interface. Residents along the edge will have to live with the buffer that is put in place and they will no doubt have a wealth of beneficial suggestions during policy development. For these reasons, the involvement in the process of persons living along the interface is of basic importance.

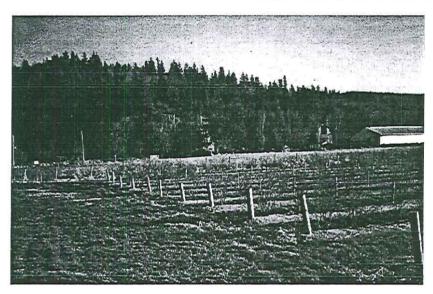
# 2. Defining the Edge Planning Area

To achieve compatibility and permanence there are several different approaches that may be taken in the development of a package of edge policies. Central to the approach outlined below is to focus the planning exercise on the interface not at the exclusion of other concerns but to afford a vantage point that should achieve practical solutions. This approach is based upon gaining a sound familiarity with the interface, first by mapping key features and then refining this work through on-site examinations and consulting with land owners in the defined planning area. The following provides an overview of the suggested approach.

- At the outset, the ALR boundary should serve as a practical guide to assist in demarcating the planning area. However, where land is being farmed but is not in the ALR, these areas may demand an adjustment to the defined edge planning area.
- ii. While the whole of the ALR boundary should be considered as the focal point of the edge plan at the outset, there may be areas that, due to their isolation, physical situation or other locational circumstances, are considered to have little or no existing or potential conflict.

An appropriate edge planning area will normally be "discovered" - not predetermined.

A typical situation may be where agricultural land abuts a mountainside. These low conflict areas should be determined by means of a "Stage One" *overview inventory*. Once these low or no conflict areas are determined there may be a necessity to conduct some degree of field work for purposes of confirmation. This procedure, in many jurisdictions, will immediately begin to eliminate portions of the ALR boundary from the need to be included in the defined edge planning area.



Low potential for land use conflict - agriculture and the ALR boundary abutting a hillside. But will the hillside remain forested and undeveloped in the longer term?

A degree of caution is suggested. Even in relatively isolated situations, conflicts such as those with wildlife or recreation may demand the application of some form of buffering or other management technique at the 'edge'. In other cases a rural residential subdivision along or within a farm area may demand careful consideration to lessen the potential for conflict. Another example may be a environmentally sensitive area in a relatively isolated situation that could demand special attention. Rural lands abutting the ALR may be regarded as having little immediate potential for conflict. However, a determination of their long term land use potential may suggest that this portion of the edge be included in the planning area.

- iii. Based on the overview inventory, a generalized edge planning area can be defined through the elimination of those portions of the edge along which little potential for conflict is considered likely.
- iv. Complete a "Stage Two" detailed inventory of key land use and physical features in the general edge planning area. Key features that should be documented through airphoto interpretation, practical knowledge of specific areas, on-site visits and consultation with land owners include:
  - existing land uses including residential, forms of agricultural, institutional and park / recreation use along with other features that fall within the generalized planning area, including major physical elements such as freeways, hydro lines and railways as well as natural features such as water courses, vegetative cover and major topographic features. All of these features may currently serve to buffer land uses or could become major assets in establishing edge policies;
  - land ownership patterns particularly private vs. government owned land, including institutional and park / recreation uses which may enhance opportunities in incorporating buffering techniques;

# RECOMMENDATION:

Some jurisdictions have very lengthy agricultural interfaces. Once the generalized edge planning area is defined it may be useful to divide the interface into sections and possibly prioritize according to the degree of potential conflict.

For further suggestions concerning inventory work at the interface Chapter 7, Page 26.

- current official plan, zoning bylaw and development permit designations:
- · areas of future land use change (areas that will potentially be developed or otherwise subject to land use change even in the long term) buffering features that are planned well in advance will be far easier to achieve than attempting to retrofit a situation after a conflict has occurred:

For example: Long range objectives of the OCP may already identify future land use changes. In other cases an urban suitability study may suggest long term urban potential of rural lands abutting the ALR.

- land uses and natural features along the interface that act as "people magnets", drawing persons to the edge for specific time periods or events. This will particularly relate to park, recreation and some institutional uses:
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). Several communities have ESA plans that represent an important inventory of critical wildlife and other environmental features that should form a key input into the edge planning process. The ESA and edge policies may act in a complementary fashion. Areas that are considered important for protection as an environmentally- sensitive area may also serve a dual purpose of providing buffering between agriculture and other land uses. At the same time, securing wildlife habitat at the periphery, rather than within, a farmed landscape or operation may be advantageous from an agricultural operational point of view.
- v. Consultation is seen as an essential part of the process of defining the edge planning area, as well as determining areas of concern and implementing mitigating measures.
  - Wherever possible, one-on-one consultation should take place with landowners within the edge planning area - on both sides of the interface.
  - · Where one-on-one consultation is not practical, information meetings should be considered to discuss the process. Another possible source of ongoing input throughout the process may be through the establishment of landowner committees representing persons along key sections of the interface. This means of consultation has worked effectively in other linear planning projects. Through consultation, whatever form it may take, local insights can be gained and concerns defined.
  - It should not be assumed that members of the farm community will all have similar concerns or agree on possible solutions along the interface. B.C. agriculture, if anything, is extremely diverse. The following represent some of the agricultural interests that should be consulted:
    - representatives of the key commodity groups active in the area (see: Appendix 17);
    - local farmers' institute, where these exist (see: Appendix16);
    - the agricultural advisory committee and / or local nongovernmental agricultural support group, where these exist; and
    - the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (see: Appendix 12).

### RECOMMENDATION:

Many planning areas are largely predetermined by, for example, a jurisdictional boundary. Once the planning area is defined, planning studies and inventory work lead to policy development. In the case of an edge planning process, it is suggested that inventory work and consultation perform a dual function of helping to define the planning area as well as being the basis of policy development.

Each of these groups can provide insights into existing concerns, may suggest possible solutions and identify future trends in the industry that could have a bearing on planning along the edge.

vi. The potential for conflict along the edge will vary dramatically and this in turn will help to define the eventual extent of the edge planning area. Armed with the results of the land use inventory and input gained during consultation, a determination can be made of the existing and potential areas of concern and the degree of severity. This process will assist in determining both the form and timing of possible solutions.

In some cases, the current treatment of the edge may in fact be the best means of ensuring land use compatibility. In such cases the edge plan will simply identify the features in place, and support their maintenance by policy and appropriate plan and / or bylaw amendments.

vii. Armed with the inventory material, insights from the consultative process and with existing and potential conflicts documented, a final determination of the edge planning area can be made. Whether the area of practical concern should be one lot back, or a standard 'measured' distance from the interface, will vary to meet local circumstances. It can be anticipated that the edge planning area will often have a rather organic appearance when viewed in map form.

# Defining The Edge Planning Area - A Summary -

- i. Focus on the ALR Boundary.
- ii. Undertake a Stage One (overview) land use inventory. Determine areas that clearly have no current or future interface conflict. This may eliminate considerable portions of the edge from the need for any further detailed consideration.
- iii. Based upon the overview inventory a generalized edge planning area will emerge through the elimination of those areas considered of low or no conflict. This will define the area that should be subject to a more detailed inventory.
- iv. Undertake a Stage Two (detailed) land use inventory within the defined edge planning area. The inventory work at this stage will have subsequent value in determining appropriate buffering and the application of setback, design, density and other policies.
- v. Consult with individuals and groups as part of the inventory, to gain insights into both existing and potential conflicts and solutions.
- vi. Through the inventory and consultation process, develop a conflict hierarchy identifying and documenting:
  - Existing land use conflicts
  - Potential conflict areas
- vii. Finalize a defined edge planning area.

# 3. Developing Edge Planning Policies

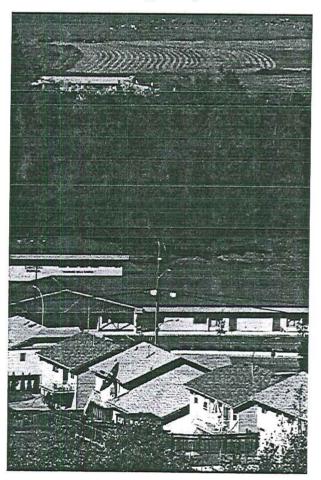
With the edge planning area defined, consideration can be given to the application of appropriate land management policies and effective mitigation measures where needed.

A brief discussion of a suggested means of dealing with existing or "live" conflicts is provided below starting on page 32. The fundamental premise of undertaking edge planning is to prevent these flash points of neighbour to neighbour conflict before they happen. If there is a single truth in dealing with land use disagreements, it must be that prevention is far better and easier to deal with than trying to find a cure after a serious disagreement has occurred.

Edge planning should address two basic levels of concern.

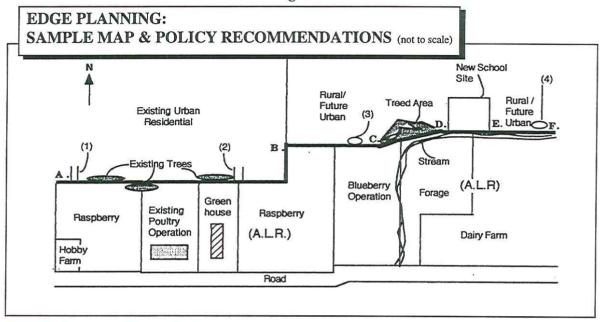
- 1. Identifiable situations that currently exist in which a future conflict has a moderate to high potential of arising.
- 2. Putting in place the necessary policy package required to lessen or avoid future conflicts where land use changes are anticipated.

In either case, an important part of the task is to identify or recognize potential problems. This is a key product of undertaking a land use inventory along the edge. Following are "sample" edge policies along a portion of an agricultural interface. While this example is strictly hypothetical, it does provide an opportunity to illustrate several techniques that may be applied at the agricultural



interface to attain the two objectives of enhanced compatibility and greater permanence. While there may be several common buffering techniques and design features that can be drawn upon, the application of these measures is the creative challenge inherent in edge planning. It will be seldom that edge policies and buffering techniques can be simply taken off the shelf. Each will be largely a unique policy package.

Figure 5



Note: This hypothetical illustration (map and text) of 'edge' policy recommendations is intended to represent an agricultural interface that abuts both an existing and developing urban area. Therefore, this represents an area of 'high' conflict potential and the policies and mitigation measures are suggested with this in mind.

While several setback distance figures, approaches and techniques are suggested, it is important to emphasize that any given situation may demand adjustments to these suggestions. It is important that each edge planning process respond appropriately to conditions on the ground.

Some principles at work: - shared responsibility along the edge

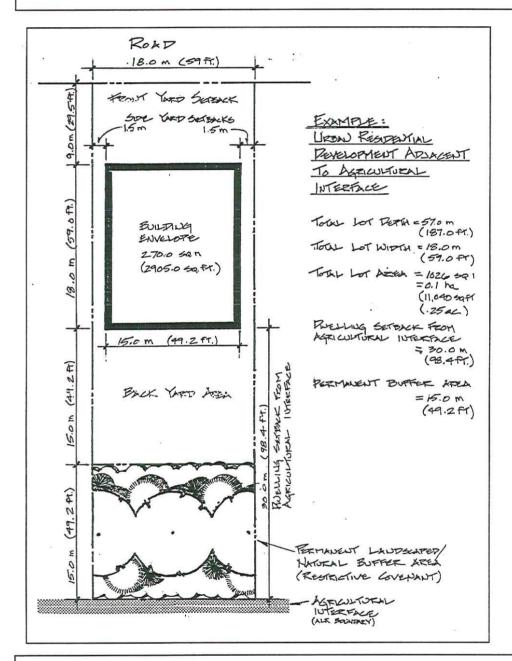
new uses absorb the bulk of mitigation

- least possible loss of agriculture's productive potential.

#### 1. Interface Area A to B

- A schedule "D" type fence (see ALC Fencing Specifications) be installed and maintained along the
  urban side of the interface between points A and B. Fence financed through the "Agricultural Interface
  Joint Mitigation Fund" (See below, page 40 for further details) due to the 'retrofit' situation along an
  existing urban / agricultural development.
- 2. Existing "Road Ending" (see #1) shall be modified to a cul-de-sac. A 3.0 m. permanent landscaped buffer and fence be established and maintained on the urban side of interface through the application of a restrictive covenant (see Sch. A.1 ALC Landscaped Buffer Specifications).
- 3. Existing identified tree cover be maintained. (Through the application of a tree removal bylaw, if available.)
- 4. Existing "Road Ending" (see #2) shall be closed off. The road area shall be converted into a public pocket park in conjunction with the existing treed area to the west, and no less than a 3.0 m. permanent landscaped buffer and fence be established and maintained on the urban side of interface (see Sch. A.1 ALC Landscaped Buffer Specifications).
- 5. All **new** farm buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or the storage of manure shall be located no closer than 30 m. from the interface.

6. Additions to existing buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or storage of manure, if located closer than 30 m. from the interface, are permitted only on the side of the existing structure furthest from the interface.



# Figure 6

A Concept for "Urban Side" Interface Buffering and Residential Setbacks

#### 2. Interface Area B to C

- 1. Edge Treatment at time of Urban Development:
  - a. Urban residential lots abutting interface maintain a depth of no less than 57 m. (187 feet) with a separation distance of 30m. (100 feet) between residential development and the agricultural boundary (see Figure 6).
  - b. A schedule "D" type fence be installed and maintained along the urban side of the interface.

- c. A 15 m. (Sch. A.3) permanent landscaped buffer be established and maintained on the urban side of the interface. The buffer will be located within the additional lot depth, and restrictions on vegetation removal by way of restrictive covenants shall be put in place within the 15 m. 'no-build', buffer area.
- d. Install a ditch along the length of the interface be to assist storm water runoff control from the developing urban area to north.
- e. Installation of a water detention facility (see # (3)).
- f. For the purpose of achieving a quiet environment for new urban residents in the developing urban area, Development Cost Charges be used to fund the purchase and installation of netting to provide crop protection from birds for the existing *blueberry operation*.

(A possible counter-part policy may be a requirement that any new blueberry operation wishing to locate next to an existing / developed urban residential interface must provide netting as the form of crop protection if locating within <u>xx</u> m. of the interface)

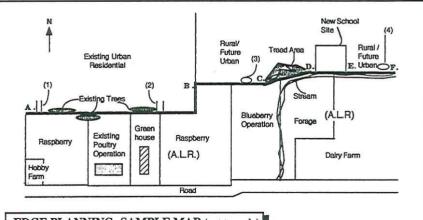
- 2. All new farm buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or the storage of manure shall be located no closer than 30 m. from the interface.
- 3. Additions to **existing** buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or storage of manure, if located closer than 30 m. from the interface, are permitted only on the side of the existing structure furthest from the interface.

#### 3. Interface Area C to D

- 1. The **Treed Area** be maintained in natural state to a depth of 30 m. (98 feet) from interface at time of urban development and dedicated as a municipal (natural) park with linkage to proposed school property. To acquire treed area:
  - dedication upon application of density bonusing, or
  - development cost charges used for purchase of area (Municipal Act, Sec. 935 & 936), or
  - form part of the 5% park acquisition at time of subdivision (reference *Municipal Act*, Sec.941 & Secs.613 & 614); or
  - a combination of above.
- 2. A schedule "D" type fence be installed and maintained along the interface.
- 3. All **new** farm buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or the storage of manure shall be located no closer than 25 m. from the interface. The reduction of the new farm building setback from 30 m to 25 m is due to the retention of the strong treed buffer on the urban side of the interface.

4. Additions to **existing** buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or storage of manure, if located closer than 25 m. from the interface, are permitted only on the side of the existing structure furthest from the interface.

5. Farms abutting the stream shall Agricultural Waste Control Regulation, and Codes of Practice and with reference to the commodity "Environmental Guidelines" developed by MAF and commodity groups if available (see: Appendix19).



EDGE PLANNING: SAMPLE MAP (not to scale)

#### 4. Interface Area D to E

- 1. School buildings must be sited no closer than 90 m. from the interface.
- 2. School play fields be oriented towards the interface and be designed with water retention capacity.
- 3. Storm water runoff from all vehicle parking surfaces to utilize municipal storm sewer system.
- 4. A schedule "D" type fence be installed and maintained along the urban side of the interface and on the north side of stream.
- 5. A 6m. permanent landscaped buffer be established on the urban side of the interface (see Sch. A.2 ALC Landscaped Buffer Specifications). The reduction of the landscaped buffer area from 15 m. to 6 m., compared to the treatment along interface area B to C, is due to the stream providing additional separation and the setback of the school and location of play fields.
- 6. All **new** farm buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or the storage of manure shall be located no closer than 30 m. from the interface.
- 7. Additions to existing buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or storage of manure, if located closer than 30 m. from the interface, are permitted only on the side of the existing structure furthest from the interface.
- 8. Farms abutting stream shall operate in accordance with the *Agricultural Waste Control Regulation* and *Codes of Practice* and with reference to the commodity "Environmental Guidelines" developed by MAF and commodity groups if available (see: Appendix 19).

#### 5. Interface Area E to F

- 1. Edge Treatment at time of Urban Development:
  - a. Urban residential lots abutting interface have a depth of no less than 57 m. (187 feet).
  - b. A schedule "D" type fence be installed and maintained along the urban side of the interface and north of the stream.
  - c. A 15 m. landscaped buffer be established and maintained on the urban side of interface (see Sch. A.3 ALC Landscaped Buffer Specifications). The buffer will be located within the additional lot depth, and restrictions on vegetation removal by way of restrictive covenants shall be put in place within the 15 m. buffer area.
  - d. Installation of a water detention facility (see # (4).)
- 2. All **new** farm buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or the storage of manure shall be located no closer than 30 m. from the interface.
- 3. Additions to **existing** buildings and structures for the keeping of animals or storage of manure, if located closer than 30 m. from the interface, are permitted only on the side of the existing structure furthest from the interface.
- 4. Farms abutting stream shall operate in accordance with the *Agricultural Waste Control Regulation*, and *Codes of Practice* and with reference to the commodity "Environmental Guidelines" where available.

# EDGE PLANNING'S RELATIONSHIP TO PLANS AND BYLAWS

# 1. Official Community Plans

An edge planning process may be initiated as a stand alone directive of a Council or a Regional Board. However, an edge planning process could be articulated as OCP policy. In this latter approach, completion of the process would tend to be elevated in its importance as public policy. This OCP / edge planning relationship is also important given that recommendations flowing from the edge planning process will, in all likelihood, be implemented through amendments to the OCP, sub-area plans and implementing bylaws. In doing so, consistency will be achieved between edge policies and plans and bylaws.

The OCP could encourage an edge planning process in the following way.

- Acknowledge, as a plan objective, the need for a focused edge planning process following OCP adoption.
- Complete, in the context of the OCP, a 'stage one' inventory to determine those portions of the agricultural interface that warrant the application of an edge planning process.
- As appropriate, prioritize the identified portions of the interface that warrant edge planning (critical / less critical) to provide direction.

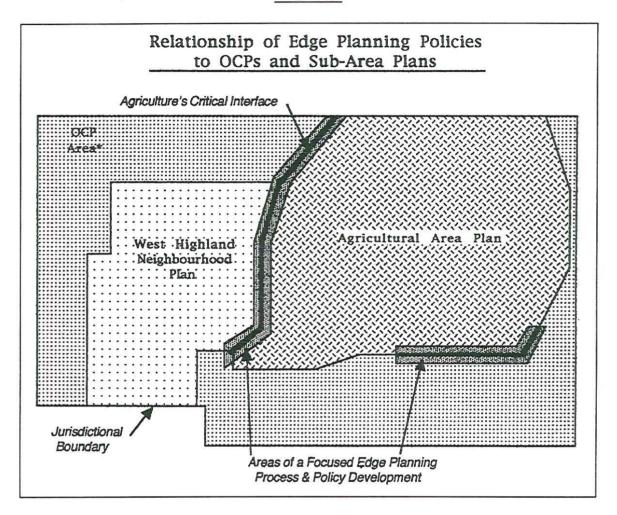
# 2. Sub-Area Plans and Implementing Bylaws

It is not unusual for jurisdictions to be divided into several sub-planning areas. It has been suggested that the ALR and other criteria provide the framework for undertaking agricultural area plans within key farm communities. Urban areas often have several identifiable communities that may be the subject of individual sub-OCP area or neighbourhood plans. Each will provide more precise policy direction for implementing bylaws. As depicted by Figure 7 on page 21, where an edge planning process has taken place and a package of recommended policies developed, these would influence all other overlapping plans and bylaws. The intent is to take the recommendations developed through the edge planning process and implement them by appropriate amends to the official community plan, adjoining neighbourhood or sub-area plans (including an AAP) and implementation bylaws.

# **Examples:**

# **How Edge Planning Recommendations May Influence Plans, Bylaws and Other Actions**

- A development permit area is included in an OCP for the protection of farming by establishing guidelines for urban development along the interface, including the provisions for permanent landscaped buffering, fencing and maintenance.
- The subdivision and servicing bylaw is amended to adopt improved provisions concerning works needed at the time of development to enhance storm water detention.
- A forested area along a portion of an interface is maintained as an urban side park and the park plan requires that the area be maintained as a "natural" park.
- Guidelines are developed for any future development of trails along the interface.
- A farm bylaw is adopted. Drawing upon the edge planning recommendations, certain setbacks from the interface for farm buildings are increased for specific types of operations on the one hand, while other setbacks are decreased upon the application of certain management techniques.
- Zoning bylaw provisions are modified to reflect the realities of the agricultural interface based on the edge planning recommendations.
- A combination of development permit area guidelines and modified zoning bylaw regulations provide improved guidance to approving officers at the time of subdivision.
- The Agricultural Land Commission utilizes the recommendations developed by the local edge planning process when considering applications along the interface under the ALC Act.
- An on-going programme is established to enhance the awareness and understanding of persons living on both sides of the interface with respect to normal farm practices and farm and urban related concerns.



<sup>\*</sup> In this schematic example the OCP applies to the entire jurisdictional area.

# IMPLEMENTING EDGE POLICIES - NEW TOOLS / NEW OPPORTUNITIES -

The planning and zoning powers of local governments have always provided opportunity to undertake focused planning and regulatory processes along agriculture's interface. While some local governments have expressed an interest in attempting to deal with interface issues, there has in fact been very little concentrated effort to use plans and bylaws to enunciate specific local policies at the edge. Indeed there are many examples where the application of buffering requirements at the time of development have been all but nonexistent. The approval of subdivision layouts, at times, appears expressly designed to act as agent provocateurs for the further urbanization of agricultural land.

There are identifiable reasons for this lack of planning interest along the interface. The seriousness of the impacts of non-farm uses on agriculture may not be fully appreciated. Many local governments, including those where agriculture has a significant presence, have largely focused on urban growth and other settlement concerns, showing limited interest in resource issues in general and agriculture in particular. This settlement emphasis has been influenced by the increasing disconnection and lack of awareness of the general population for agriculture which permeates to elected officials and their advisors at all levels.

While the ALR boundary is becoming ever more stable, there may be an expectation - false or otherwise - that the boundary is going to be in a continuous state of flux. This reflects "old thinking". It represents a philosophical position that adheres to the principle that the outward expansion of urbanization onto farmland is a natural phenomenon. Indeed the application process itself, embedded within the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, may well have served to reinforce these expectations of change.

On the Province's part there have been only sporadic efforts at providing effective and coordinated support for local governments in dealing with the identification of edge issues and the application of buffering and other preventative measures. Until recently there were few legislative instruments available to deal with interface issues. However, with the adoption of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act (FPPA) in 1995, new legislative tools are now available to more effectively plan for greater land use harmony along agriculture's interface. It is probably fair to anticipate that these measures will prove more effective when developed in combination rather than separately.

The FPPA forms part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Strengthening Farming initiative. This is particularly significant when considering edge planning since the initiative is strongly based on building better relationships between farmers and farm neighbours and the enhancement of partnerships between farming and local governments.<sup>2</sup> Several of the new legislative components contained within the FPPA and new support products that will assist planning along agriculture's interface, are highlighted below.

# 1. Plan Content - A Stronger Focus on Agriculture

As outlined in Chapter 4 page 17, one of the consequential amendments to the *Municipal Act* provided by the FPPA is that:

• a plan may include policies respecting the maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area (ALR or area licensed for aquaculture) or other areas designated for agricultural use in the plan. (Municipal Act - Sec. 878(1)(c))

The inclusion of this section in the *Municipal Act* was designed to broadly encourage more focused planning efforts related to agriculture, particularly within official community plans and agricultural area plans. Policies specifically dealing with the interface may prove to be the most effective of all planning initiatives aimed at maintaining and enhancing farming. As a result Section 878(1)(c) of the *Municipal Act* should be considered a clear opportunity to define critical portions of the interface for the development of edge policies.

The FPPA has provided new tools for edge planning.

For further information on the Strengthening Farming initiative see: <u>Strengthening Farming in British Columbia - A Guide to Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right-to-Farm) Act;</u> September, 1996; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. Also, see *Appendix 19* for the Contents of this publication.

# 2. Development Permits for the Protection of Farming

The FPPA includes further consequential amendments to the *Municipal Act* to provide the opportunity to designate, within a community plan, areas for the protection of farming (Sec. 879(1)(c)). This subsection of the *Municipal Act* is complemented by the amendment of Section 920 by expressly linking the development permit area designation to the application of buffering techniques.

• A development permit for land that has been designated under section 879(1)(c) may include requirements for screening, landscaping, fencing and siting of buildings or structures in order to provide for the buffering or separation of development from farming on adjoining or reasonably adjacent land. (Municipal Act - Sec. 920(10))

The development permit used for the purpose of buffering development from farming is largely an "urban side" instrument although its application may be equally applicable in the case of industrial, recreation or blocks of rural residential subdivision located adjacent or within an agricultural area. These amendments to the *Municipal Act* will provide clear implementation opportunities for many of the edge policies, including those illustrated by Figure 5 (page 15) - Edge Planning: Sample Map & Policy Recommendations. As such, the broadening of the criteria for the designation of development permits represents an important new opportunity to more effectively plan along the interface.

## 3. Land Title Act Amendments

Historically there has not been a concerted effort to ensure greater land use harmony at the time of urban subdivision next to farming. As a result,

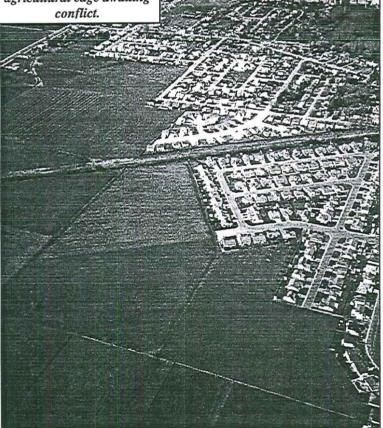
opportunities are lost and the potential for conflict is compounded by poor urban design and development along the farm edge. The Agricultural Land Commission, when considering applications within the ALR or along its boundary, may require mitigative measures by way of modifications to a subdivision's design and / or the application of fencing or other forms of buffering. However, this process is ad hoc at best because more often than not, urban development occurs fully outside the ALR and outside the jurisdiction of the Commission.

To begin to address this concern the FPPA included two consequential amendments to the Land Title Act (LTA) by expanding the powers of approving officers to refuse subdivision if:

 the anticipated development of the subdivision would unreasonably interfere with farming operations on adjoining or reasonably adjacent properties due to inadequate buffering or separation of the development from the farm (Land Title Act -Sec. 86 (1) (c) (x));or

See: Appendix 6
City of Surrey
Development Permit
Area for the
Protection of Farming

No buffering, minimal fencing, no provision for additional residential separation distances and road endings pointing into the ALR - an urban / agricultural edge awaiting



despite the need to ensure that a proposed subdivision does not make
impracticable future subdivision of land adjacent to it, the extent or
location of highways or highway allowances shown on a plan (of
subdivision) is such that it would unreasonably or unnecessarily
increase access to land in the ALR. (Land Title Act - Sec. 86 (1) (c) (xi))

These amendments complement the designating of development permit areas. The LTA amendments essentially do two things. Firstly, they provide an opportunity to assess the need and ensure provision of adequate buffering of development from farm operations at the time of subdivision. Secondly, unnecessary road endings abutting the ALR should be eliminated at the time of subdivision.

Addressing the question of *unnecessary* road access aimed at land in the ALR is an important provision. Road construction can of course both encourage and direct urbanization. Section 75 of the *Land Title Act* makes reference to the need to consider the access of land lying beyond or around land proposed to be subdivided. The need Section 75 is clear and its application is quite appropriate where land adjacent to a subdivision proposal is planned for future non-farm development or an adjoining parcel, even if in the ALR is "land locked".

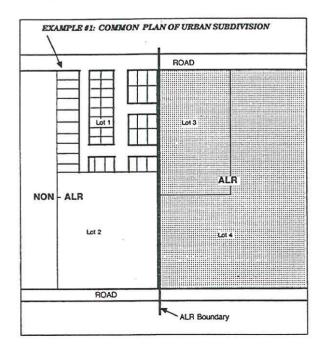
However, land in the ALR, by virtue of a long standing-Provincial policy, is not land planned for urban development. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples where road endings pointing into the ALR unduly increase expectations of land use change within the ALR and are simply acting to promote the future urbanization of farmland.

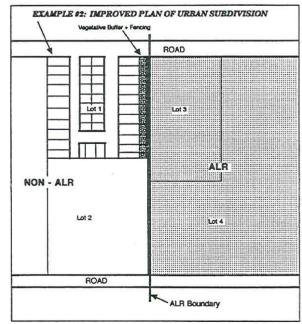
At first glance the new amendments to Section 86 of the LTA would appear in conflict with Section 75. In fact, the amendments are simply requiring a modified approach by approving officers to help ensure greater sensitivity of subdivision design next to land in the ALR, by providing a reasonable level of buffering and avoiding unnecessary road endings pointed into farmland.

The following "before and after" examples provide a very basic illustration of the concepts contained in the Section 86 amendments to the LTA.

The Agricultural Land
Commission has often seen
subdivision proposals next to the
ALR as shown in Example 1. In
contrast, Example 2 has deeper
residential lots next to the
farmland allowing for a
permanent vegetative buffer and
fence to put in place and the
road endings abutting the ALR
have been removed.

See also the booklet: "Planning Subdivisions Near Agriculture" and the report "Landscaped Buffer Specifications" for additional ideas about edge treatment.





There is a clear relationship between the amendments to the Land Title Act and policies that may be contained in an edge plan. While the LTA amendments will be useful in the implementation of policies contained in an edge plan, the edge plan will act as the primary guide to approving officers in determining the adequacy of buffering and separation when considering subdivision proposals.

To support the objectives of the Section 86 amendments to the Land Title Act, guide material and support from MAF and the ALC is available as outlined below on page 26.

Where ALR applications are involved, the Commission should provide clear conditions concerning buffering and road layout upon subdivision.

The enhanced role of approving officers to ensure the application of buffering and less intrusive plans of subdivision along the interface should be assisted by the Agricultural Land Commission wherever possible. While largely intended to influence the subdivision of land along the urban side of the interface, the Land Title Act changes also may apply to subdivision within the ALR. In addition, the ALR boundary is often the focus of application activity under the Agricultural Land Commission Act. Where allowed, these applications are often the precursor to subdivision and urban development and the longer term impacts of these land use changes require anticipation. It is in this capacity that the Commission can provide direction for approving officers in their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Land Title Act amendments. When considering applications it is common for the Commission to place conditions on approvals and these may involve several different mitigative measures including buffering. However, where land is excluded from the ALR the Commission tends to legislatively "lose sight" of the subject land. Even in cases where land has been excluded expressly for the purpose of improving buffering along the interface, once the Commission's decision-making power has been finalized, there has been a lack of follow-through on implementing and maintaining buffering at the edge.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- When considering applications along the interface under the Agricultural Land Commission Act, the Commission should continue to fully consider appropriate buffering measures in cases where applications may be approved.
- Where land is excluded from the ALR, the Commission should consider retaining an interest through such means as performance bonds, restrictive covenants and/or "phased" exclusions to ensure that appropriate conditions concerning buffering, the future development of the land and subdivision design are met.
- To assist approving officers in undertaking their duties under Section 86 of the Land Title Act, the Commission should ensure that any conditions associated with subdivision and road design, land development and buffering are clearly enunciated.
- · Where a local government has adopted 'edge policies', that the Commission make every effort to support these policies through its decision-making powers involving applications along the interface.

With the heightened emphasis on enhancing land use harmony and increasing permanency along the interface, the Commission will have a continued and indeed enlarged role to play in augmenting the efforts of approving officers within the context of their decision-making role. In turn, coordinating the actions of the Commission with local authorities will provide another means to implement the policies generated through edge planning processes. The recommendations on the following page outlines means to assist in realizing these objectives.

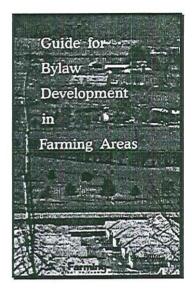
# Guide Material and Support for Land Title Act Amendments

#### Available

- Fencing Specifications Agricultural Land Commission .
- Landscaped Buffering Specifications Agricultural Land Commission.
- "Subdivision Near Agriculture ... a Guide for Approving Officers", produced by MAF and the ALC, is specifically related to the Section 86 LTA amendments and was developed in consultation with approving officers.
- Planning Subdivisions Near Agriculture, produced by MAF and the ALC, is an information booklet outlining the Section 86 LTA amendments. The booklet is designed specifically for persons planning to subdivide land near or adjacent to farmland and will assist approving officers.
- Ongoing support by ALC and MAF to provide comment to approving officers, upon request, to discuss the potential impacts on farms and farmland of specific subdivision proposals and to suggest the application of appropriate buffering techniques.

#### Planned or Proposed

- Workshop sessions with approving officers and MAF and ALC support persons to discuss in detail the Section 86 amendments and the "Approving Officer Guide".
- The gradual development of edge plans and policies along agriculture's interface by local governments will provide clear, predetermined guidance for buffering, setbacks and other design measures aimed at ensuring greater land use compatibility at the interface.
- A comprehensive "Urban / Agriculture Buffering Guide" (see below page 31).



# 4. Bylaw Standards

As outlined in Chapter 4 (page 18) and further discussed in Chapter 5 (page 12), the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act provided for the development of provincial standards to guide the review and updating of the agricultural components of zoning and rural land use bylaws and the creation of farm bylaws by local governments.

These provisions are contained in Part 26, Division 8 of the *Municipal Act*. The bylaw standards, in many ways, represent the "farm side" counterparts to the designation of development permit areas for the purpose of ensuring the application of buffering techniques on the urban side of the interface. The standards will involve many, if not most, bylaw elements related to farming such as setbacks, siting and similar provisions.

New farm bylaws specifically include the power to prohibit certain farm operations where appropriate. While these legislative measures may apply anywhere in an agricultural area, they will have particular relevance in close proximity to non-farm uses to ensure greater compatibility. Bylaw standards aimed at providing setbacks, buffering and otherwise enhancing compatibility must be applied with sensitivity to ensure that unreasonable restrictions on farm operations are avoided. As noted previously, the principle should be to provide for the broadest number of agricultural options over the largest possible amount of agricultural land. In many cases this will require consensus to strike a fair and reasonable balance. Finding the appropriate balance in many cases will not be without challenge.

The process of updating existing bylaws and creating new farm bylaws, while eventually requiring the approval of the Minister of Agriculture and Food, will require local and Provincial authorities to work closely together. As such, the process has been designed to draw upon the talents of both local governments and the Province and should also include representation from the farm community.

In recognition of the diversity of B.C.'s agricultural land base, the potential for flexibility has been built into both the development of the bylaw standards and their application. This is intended to ensure sensitivity to local conditions. While applicable throughout the ALR, bylaw standards will have a particularly important function in the implementing of edge policies.

# Flexibility Built Into Bylaw Standards

- Bylaw standards, when developed, may differ for different parts of B.C.
- New farm bylaws may be different for different size or types of farms or operations, site conditions, adjoining uses or for different areas.
- During the updating of zoning and rural land use bylaws the Provincial bylaw standards may be altered to meet local circumstances, where appropriate, upon approval of the MAF minister.

# Right to Farm & A New Complaint Process

One of the primary components of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act (FPPA) is the "right to farm" section and the establishment of a new process for considering complaints involving farming operations. Long sought after by the farm community, the FPPA replaces the former Agriculture Protection Act. A primary objective of the FPPA is to protect normal farm practices. Key questions then arise: what are normal farm practices and who decides if such practices are being undertaken?

An intensive effort by MAF has been undertaken with the industry to document current farm practices.3 As part of this effort, existing guidelines, standards and codes of practice were utilized to avoid "re-inventing the wheel". The protection afforded by the FPPA will involve all farm businesses when operated in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards followed by similar farm businesses under similar circumstances. Thus, the description of practices may vary in different areas and for different types of farm businesses and considers the use of innovative technology. The codifying of farm practices will be a fundamental tool to guide the complaint process which is not intended to protect the poor operator, but rather to vigorously protect good farm operators from unwarranted complaints.

The concept of right to farm is often misunderstood and raises fears of an "anything goes" attitude. This is not at all the case and the complaint process that has been developed through the FPPA is designed with this in mind. Right to farm is very much a double- edged sword. A farmer is afforded protection from unwarranted nuisance complaints when working within the context of health and environmental standards and by the application of sound

> management practices as established by codes such as the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation. In many cases, the fact that we have situations where

persons may feel compelled to complain about a farm operation may, in itself, be a reflection of a lack of past efforts to recognize and prevent land use conflict.

However, despite the new legislative tools and improved support products it can be anticipated that farm-related complaints will continue to occur and very often these will occur along agriculture's interface with non-farm uses. This being the case, the complaint process will have a clear role to play in dealing with land use conflict at the agriculture interface.

# Strengthening Farming in British Columbia

A Guide to Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act

SEPTEMBER, 1996





Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Farm Practices in B.C. Reference Guide, September 1996. (Found in "Strengthening Farming in British Columbia - A Guide to Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act".

# **Concerns About Farm Operations**

As most people gradually lose their direct connection with agriculture, they are also becoming less aware of normal farm practices. Sometimes concerns arise as a result of people simply not understanding current, safe and appropriate operating techniques. Improving an awareness of agriculture will be increasingly important as a means of lessening the potential for conflict. Endeavours like "Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation" and the future development of suggested informational material such as "The Countryside and You" and "Agriculture is Your Neighbour" will play an important role in efforts to heighten awareness. The Farm Practices in B.C. Reference Guide developed by MAF will provide guidance not only to the new Farm Practices Board but also to local governments, the industry and general public.

Like most industries, agriculture too can be affected by those few who may be insensitive to their neighbours or who may not operate in a manner that is environmentally responsible. The Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Environment, Lands and Parks, with input from the farm community, jointly developed the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation and Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management which were adopted in 1992. Their purpose is to ensure that agricultural waste is handled in an environmentally-sound manner

The Regulation and Codes are in turn supported by a series of detailed "Environmental Guidelines" for various farm commodities (see: Appendix 19, page 2). At the producer level Peer Advisory Groups have been created such as the Cattlemen's Associations' peer inspection service called "EnvirAlert".

Several organizations are committed to furthering the intent of the Regulation and Codes of Practice and to working as partners in the complaint process being developed under the Farm Practices Protection Act. The Regulation and Codes provide one means that has been developed to deal with the "one bad apple" problem without impacting whole segments of the agricultural industry with prohibitive land use regulation.

The new informal and formal complaint processes evolving from the Farm Practices Protection Act, including the new Farm Practices Board, will complement previous efforts at improving land use and environmental compatibility. New processes are emerging to address complaints involving farm practices and to protect good operators in an atmosphere of problem-solving aimed at keeping all parties out of court.

Following is an outline of the basic steps involved in the new complaint process. It is anticipated that most concerns will be resolved through the informal process.

#### Informal Concern Process - Overview

 A concern may be lodged with a local government or a regional office of MAF. If the concern is lodged with a local government, effort should be made to resolve the matter locally if possible. This may require consultation with MAF personnel. If the person lodging the concern

Where a concern may also be related to a local bylaw, local governments should make every effort to resolve the matter.

- remains unsatisfied the person should be directed to the nearest MAF office to draw the matter to the attention of MAF staff.
- MAF staff will log the concern and attempt to resolve the matter, which
  may involve discussing the situation with the farm operator in question
  and reporting back to the person voicing concern.
- If the concerned citizen remains unsatisfied, MAF staff will, if appropriate, request the assistance of the local *Peer Advisors* to investigate the matter to seek resolution and report its findings to MAF.
- MAF staff will report the findings of the Peer Advisors to the concerned person and farmer in a further effort to resolve the matter.
- If the person remains unsatisfied, a formal complaint may be launched with the Farm Practices Board (FPB). MAF will retain all documentation in case the FPB requests this information as part of its consideration.

#### Formal Complaint Process - Overview

- A potential complainant contacts the FPB prior to filing an official complaint. If the informal concern process has not taken place the FPB, in all likelihood, will suggest this process be used in an effort to resolve the complaint.
- A person felt aggrieved by any odour, noise, dust or other disturbance resulting from a farm operation may file an official complaint in writing, providing details on the nature of the complaint, to the Farm Practices Board for a determination as to whether the matter results from a normal farm practice.
- The complaint will be officially filed, receipt of the complaint acknowledged and the farmer notified. All relevant file information collected by MAF during the informal process may be requested by the FPB.
- The FPB may take further steps, including seeking the advice of persons knowledgeable about farm practices and consultation with the farmer and complainant, to seek a settlement of the matter.
- The FPB, after giving the complainant an opportunity to be heard, may
  refuse to hear the complaint or a panel may refuse the complaint during
  its deliberations if the matter is found to be trivial, frivolous, or not in
  good faith. The complainant must be given the reasons for the refusal in
  writing.
- If the matter is not trivial and efforts at informal settlement have not been successful, the Chair of the FPB will initiate the hearing process by establishing a Panel of 3 members of the Board.
- A hearing is open to the public and may be conducted in an informal manner. The Panel will reach a decision to either dismiss the complaint or order the farmer to modify or cease the practice. The reasons for the decision will be forwarded to the complainant and farmer in writing.

The Farm Practices
Board consists of the
members of the BC
Marketing Board and
as many as 10
additional members
appointed by the
Minister of Agriculture
and Food.

- The Board may make recommendations to the appropriate parties with respect to the circumstances of the complaint. In the case of the complaint being refused, the matter will be considered finalized. Where the complaint is upheld and the farmer, upon the recommendation of the Board, does not take appropriate action, the protection afforded by the Farm Practices Protection Act may be voided.
- The decision of the Board (Panel) may, within 60 days, be appealed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia only on a question of law or jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

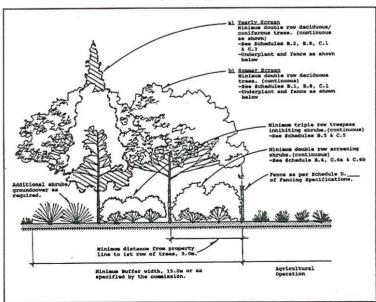
#### RECOMMENDATION:

That MAF continue to monitor and report on the nature, location and general circumstances of the concerns and complaints related to farm practices. This information is to be used by local governments and Agri-team members to assist in the development of edge policies, the application of appropriate buffering and the improvement of awareness programs to lessen the potential for future complaints.

# 6. Buffering Guidelines

The strength of edge policies will be in their ability to respond effectively to local circumstances. As a result the package of edge policies must be 'custom made'. Despite the need for flexibility and creativity that this implies, having a body of work available that draws upon collective experiences and acts as a guide to assist in developing practical land management policies at the agricultural edge is considered important.

To assist in this effort MAF and the ALC have identified, as a long term objective, the need to develop a comprehensive buffering guide. MAF has



begun to consider models for the application of geographic information systems (GIS) to inventory land uses at the interface and use this information as a basis for developing edge policies and applying buffering techniques. (See: Chapter 7, p. 21)

The completion of the Commission's Landscaped Buffering Specifications document was an important effort aimed at outlining landscape features that can assist in buffering farm and non-farm land uses. There are, however, several other sources to draw upon, such as the work of the former District of Matsqui

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See the Farm Practices Protection Act, Sections 1 to 12, for legislative details concerning the Farm Practices Board and formal hearing process.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That MAF and the ALC, with input from local governments, the agricultural sector and others, develop a comprehensive policy document that will act as a practical guide to the application of buffering techniques along the agricultural interface.

(Urban Rural Conflict Mitigation Techniques), the Commission's Fencing Specifications and the work of MAF including the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation, the Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management and the Environmental Guidelines for various commodities.

To a large extent the success of edge policies will rest upon the sensitivity of the form and design of urban, recreational and other non-farm land uses along the edge. Therefore, in any buffering guide, close attention must be paid to urban development at the interface. A buffering guide will also have to consider the variability of potential impacts commodity by commodity in order to provide practical advice to local planners and decision-makers. The objective is to develop a comprehensive buffering guide that represents a 'nuts and bolts' document describing a variety of different buffering methods, where and when they should be used and land use relationships that should be promoted and those that should be avoided.

# 7. Dealing With Existing Conflicts

Edge planning and the application of buffering techniques represent efforts to anticipate potential impacts and points of conflict before they happen. However, past land use decisions have exposed farmers and their neighbours to situations that have heightened the potential for friction between land users. In simple terms these represent existing situations that are going to be difficult to "plan" our way out of. Additionally, it is often difficult to clearly determine responsibility for the conflict. In many situations the affected parties have acted in good faith and in accordance with existing regulations at the time of development. Very often what is at fault is the lack of prior anticipation of the potential for land use conflict at the time of development and the lack of effective policies to avoid future problems.

# **Using Available Tools & Opportunities**

It is important that existing legislative tools that may provide opportunities to improve buffering between farm and non-farm uses are used creatively.

#### For example:

Section 935 of the Municipal Act lists various uses of development cost charges including (935(b)(i)) the acquisition or reclaiming of land for park use and (935(b)(ii)) paying the capital costs for various forms of site preparation and park amenities including; "providing fencing, landscaping, drainage....". Often a park located next to farmland can act as a buffer between farm and other urban uses. In developing a farm side park, if the provisions of Section 935 are used to provide fencing and landscaping along the agricultural boundary it can aid the prevention of trespass and enhance the buffer. In addition, park drainage facilities, even if it is simply the orientation of ditches or provision of a detention pond, can effectively prevent flooding from the park onto farmland.

This is just one example of effectively using existing tools where the application of Section 935 provisions can take on a dual purpose - enhancing the park *and* providing improved buffering along the farm edge.

Attempting to resolve a disagreement to everyone's satisfaction *after* a real or perceived conflict has occurred can be challenging. Sadly, situations can easily degenerate into a people problem of clashing personalities.

A solution to disagreements will normally demand co-operation and compromise between landowners to successfully put in place a long term solution. Local authorities can play an important role, not just in being a party to a solution but by ensuring that cool heads have an opportunity to prevail and those persons who can effect a solution - the adjoining landowners, local and Provincial officials - are brought together in a positive atmosphere in which there is goodwill on all sides to seek an equitable solution.

At times, simply creating better understanding between landowners may resolve an apparent conflict. However, a more permanent solution may require the putting into place appropriate buffering. It is obviously far easier to achieve desired mitigating techniques as development and land use changes are occurring. The use of landscape buffering, sensitive urban design, appropriate setbacks of agricultural buildings, open space and park land acquisition on the urban side of the interface, and the maintenance of natural features separating land uses, are examples of ways to ensure physical separation of differing uses 'before the fact'.

Unfortunately many hard 'edge' situations exist, thanks in part to past land management decisions. In some cases the only solution may be to "retrofit" the interface by introducing buffering features 'after the fact'. Although it can be difficult to achieve, a long term commitment to agriculture and a desire to enhance the livability for all concerned may demand a minimum level of buffering. This could, for example, require ditching to avoid storm water runoff; fencing and a programme of fence maintenance; the planting of hedging materials, modifications to farm practices at the interface, or a combination of these types of actions.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That consideration be given to the establishment of an "Agricultural Interface Joint Mitigation Fund" by the Province, to be administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Where a local government or the Ministry have interface concerns drawn to their attention that may require the installation of mitigating buffering measures, the matter would be jointly investigated, all parties consulted and a report prepared. The report would set out the nature of the needed mitigation, priority, and costs involved. If the project was accepted by both parties and funds were available, the Provincial mitigation fund would be equally matched by the local government to complete the project with appropriate commitments by adjoining affected landowners to ensure ongoing maintenance of the works as required.

Retrofitting of the edge, however, comes at a cost. For this reason it is suggested that Provincial agricultural authorities pursue approaches with local governments that provide means to effectively deal with the existing "hot spots" along the interface. One approach may be to have the initial capital costs of agreed buffering measures equally shared by the local and Provincial levels, with long term maintenance resting with the landowner or owners involved. While it is recognized that this approach would involve a fiscal commitment through the establishment of a joint mitigation fund, the annual budget for such a programme need not be extravagant. Within the constraints of even limited funds several projects could be undertaken annually, representing a clear and practical commitment to dealing with interface conflicts and in turn the pursuit of broader local and provincial policy objectives.

Such a programme, however, should not be used as a means to avoid the pursuit of edge planning and

policy development aimed at avoiding land use conflicts in the future. Nor should the joint mitigation fund replace the responsible actions of landowners



where conflicts may be under consideration through the established complaint process including the Farm Practices Board. Obviously clear criteria would have to be developed to guide the programme. The criteria should be centred on the resolution of existing, outstanding land use conflicts where all other means to resolve the matter have been exhausted, and based upon the principle of a shared commitment at both the Provincial and local level.

An orchard next to a motel in the Okanagan made for a very "poor neighbour" situation. To Retro-fit the edge for purposes of improving compatibility at this site, a chain link fence was installed, a tight hedging material (that will eventually grow several metres high) and an irrigation system to maintain the hedge was put in place and the gradual adjustment away from the property line of one row of cherry trees was undertaken.

This provides an example of what an Agricultural Interface Joint Mitigation Fund could accomplish. In this case costs were born by the Okanagan Valley Tree Fruit Authority and the orchardist.

# 8. Good Neighbours / Aware Neighbours:

"There where it is we do not need the wall: He is all pine and I am apple orchard, My apple trees will never get across And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him. He only says, "Good fences make good ..."<sup>5</sup>

Robert Frost, in his well known poem *Mending Wall*, is not in fact advocating the building of walls between people. More often than not, neighbours who work and live side by side can sit down and work out their concerns to each others' mutual satisfaction. Unfortunately this is not always the case and at times it takes more than 'good fences to make good neighbours'. It is for this reason that the agriculture interface must be recognized as a 'special' planning

Frost, Robert; "Mending Wall", Modern Verse in English: 1900-1950, 1958, Page 188-189.

area requiring an intensive examination of current land uses, the application of specific policies and, in some cases, the introduction of physical works to enhance compatibility. While landscaped buffers and other physical 'edge' treatments are important, many points of disagreement could be avoided by a fuller understanding of normal farm practices and the general application of 'good neighbour' approaches aimed at enhancing awareness of concerns of those living on both sides of the interface. There are a number of steps that

can be taken at the local level to promote good neighbour policies.

The potential for conflicting views is not limited to urban and agricultural neighbours. Over 90% of all persons located in rural settings within B.C. are not living on a farm.6 Many rural dwellers are in reality former city folks living in the country, bringing with them their urban values. While many of these people reside in nonagricultural parts of rural areas, many live on small parcels within the ALR or in small, rural residential nodes within farm communities. Unfortunately for some living within agricultural areas, the reality of normal farm practices may not always be consistent with the image they had anticipated.



It can be anticipated that multi-family housing built on the edge of the ALR without buffering or the application of sufficient setbacks has a high potential for future conflict with the adjoining agricultural operation.

In order to heighten the agricultural awareness for persons living close to or within agricultural areas, the following suggestions are made.

#### a) Increasing Awareness At The Interface

"Agriculture Is Your Neighbour" One means to enhance awareness of persons living in close proximity to farm areas is to regularly provide information that will better acquaint them with normal farm practices and the agricultural activities in their community. A possible approach would be to directly target households along or close to the farm edge by mailing out, at regular intervals an informative package that would have as its focus a brochure, possibly entitled "Agriculture Is Your Neighbour".

<sup>6</sup> In 1991 BC had a rural population of 641,290. The rural farm population was 50,355 and the rural non-farm population was 591,570. See: Statistics Canada - Cat. No. 93-330, April 1993.

#### DEVELOPING AN AGR-INFORMATION PACKAGE:

For Persons Living in Close Proximity to an Agricultural Area

With *municipalities* and *regional districts* taking a lead role and actively involving the local farm groups, local relevancy of the information will be ensured.

# MAF and the ALC can assist by:

- developing a "model" or generic brochure and associated information;
- providing background on the experience of other local governments that have developed similar information packages;
- providing available statistical information and commodity profiles as available;
- providing other material that may be included directly into the information package (example:: "Buy B.C." fridge magnets) to improve the packages' interest level.

# Brochure - "Agriculture Is Your Neighbour" - may include:

- · a brief history of local agriculture and farm areas;
- · reference to important local agricultural activities;
- provide information about normal farm practices with particular reference to local agriculture;
- discuss "good neighbour" practices (Examples: avoid trespass, harassment of stock and vandalism of equipment);
- comment on the benefits of agriculture to the local economy along with other benefits such as those related to wildlife, aesthetics and recreation; and
- outline the objectives of the Strengthening Farming Initiative, FPPA and ALR.

### Other Package Material:

- contact phone, fax and address for comments on material or further information;
- "Farm Facts Sheet" a quick reference to the local agricultural scene;
- information about annual agricultural fairs, agr.
  weeks or months, and other agricultural activities
  such as farm or (historical) barn tours include
  contact phone numbers for more details;
- "interest grabbers" (Examples: agr. related fridge magnets, buttons, and bookmarks);
- addresses, contact phone numbers and brief history of locally active farm organizations.: and
- MAF and "FarmScape" Web Site addresses.

#### STEPS:

- Local government takes a lead role, possibly with the direct involvement of the Agricultural Advisory Commission (where available) or other local farm organization such as a farmers' institute, to assist in an ongoing advisory capacity;
- 2. Seek input from MAF and the ALC;

- 3. Develop a draft information package including:
  - a brochure as the centrepiece; and

- other informative material that will raise the recipient's interest in the package.



#### Area of Mail Out:

- e.g. all properties on the urban side of the interface within 100 metres or two parcels deep from the interface;
- isolated rural residential pockets within the ALR; and
- all small (residential) parcels 0.8 ha.
   (2 acres) or smaller in the ALR.

The package of material should contain phone and fax numbers to allow persons to seek further information and to express any comments concerning the information. This *feedback* should be maintained on file and reviewed when the material is being revised prior to future mail outs.

Besides the three year repeat mail out, if the technical ability is available to easily identify *new landowners* within the mail out area at the time of purchase, the information package could be sent to these new residents shortly after the time of purchase. Alternatively, make the packages available to local real estate agents who sell properties in the designated areas.

- Determine an appropriate "mail out" area.
- 5. Generate and maintain a mailing list for mail out area.
- Prior to initial mail out, ask a focus group of farm and urban representatives to review the package and suggest modifications.
- 7. Finalize material and mail out.
- 8. Revise material and repeat mail about every three years.

The overall objective is to ensure greater harmony at the point where two differing land uses meet. In doing so there should be reciprocal benefits for urban residents and producers. By undertaking the dissemination of information on a regular basis, it will maintain awareness among those persons who may have previously received the material, it will reach persons who have recently moved into the 'edge' area and it will allow for redefining the mail-out area to take into account new urban development that may have occurred along the urban / agricultural edge.

Other benefits of an active programme to increase awareness of agriculture among urban residents along the edge will be the potential lessening of urban impacts such as trespassing, theft of crops and vandalism experienced by farm operators. This effort will also directly assist any edge planning work that may have been undertaken and will complement the objectives of the Farm Practices Protection Act by lessening possible unwarranted complaints directed at farm operators. It will also help ensure that the public is aware and supportive of the need for various farm-related programmes, particularly those that may be associated with the provision of agricultural infrastructure and "Buy BC".

Serving as a model, the Ladner ALR interface in Delta, a distance of over 11 kilometres, was used as an example to apply a 100 metre deep urban edge mail out area. In this case all properties adjacent to or within at least a two lot depth were "captured", resulting in approximately 800 properties within this model mail out area.



Making a strong contribution to enhancing awareness of farm activities for persons in the ALR or living in close proximity, MAF and the ALC have developed a booklet.

"The Countryside and You -Understanding Farming".

### b) Increasing Awareness: In The ALR

A second group that should receive a different information package is new landowners in the ALR. As an information piece it would have similar objectives as the "Agriculture Is Your Neighbour" package, but would have an additional objective of addressing the implications of the Agricultural Land Commission Act and its relationship to local planning and zoning regulations and other Provincial legislation. The major objective of the package is to inform new ALR landowners:

- · of the concept of normal farm practices;
- that they are purchasing property within a farming area that either is currently used or could be actively used for agricultural purposes; and
- that the land is preserved for the long term for agricultural purposes.

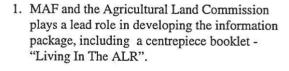
It is important that the information package be provided *prior* to the finalization of the sale of land.

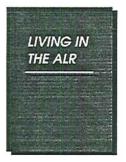
Providing this information at the time of sale is not intended as a sales deterrent. Rather, it is a means of ensuring a fuller awareness, particularly for non-farm residents, of the implications of living in the ALR. It could stress that in the Reserve, agriculture represents the use of priority and that they will be living within agriculture's working land base. The information package will serve a supportive role to the ALR notation that appears on the title of all properties located in the ALR. There could be some secondary benefits by potentially lessening the basis for future applications under the Agricultural Land Commission Act. It will be supportive of the objectives of the Farm Practices Protection Act to strengthen farming and lessen the longer term potential for land use conflict.

# DEVELOPING AN AGR-INFORMATION PACKAGE: For Persons Living Within the ALR

#### STEPS:

While information pertaining to the ALR should be relatively standardized, additional material could be added to provide more *regional relevance*.





 During development of the base material, consult with key interest groups including UBCM, representatives of local governments, the Real Estate Board of British Columbia and representatives of the agricultural sector.

# The booklet may include:

- A summary of the objectives of the Provincial agricultural land preservation program;
- A brief overview of the ALR how and why it was designated;
- The legal implications of living in the ALR with respect to the use and subdivision of land;
- The relationships between the Agricultural Land Commission Act and local government plans and bylaws and other Provincial legislation;
- A strong emphasis on normal farm practices that might be anticipated by persons living in an agricultural area and the role of the Farm Practices Protection Act; and
- A brief overview of the importance of agriculture to B.C.

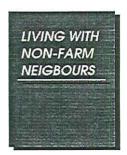
- 3. Because the recipients of the information will be persons interested in purchasing land in the ALR, the material will be somewhat more formal than "Agriculture Is Your Neighbour". Additional information could be included to add interest and assist in regionalizing the material, including:
  - a booklet acting as the centrepiece of the package;

#### Other Possible Material:

- contact phone numbers of ALC and regional MAF office(s);
- Local "Farm Facts Sheet" highlighting the importance of agriculture in the region;
- · ALR Brochure "Preserving Our Foodlands; and
- · MAF and "FarmScape" Web Site addresses

 other informative material that will add interest and increase the recipients' awareness of the ALR and agriculture in the area.

- Working together, the Commission could take the lead in developing the information package, and the Real Estate Board could take the lead in ensuring the material's distribution by real estate agents to prospective ALR property owners.
- 4. Simultaneously, while developing the information package, the Commission and Real Estate Board of British Columbia should discuss the most effective means to ensure the information package is provided to new owners of land in the ALR prior to the sale being finalized.
- 5. If the process of voluntary distribution of the material does not appear effective, consideration should be given by the ALC and MAF to pursuing necessary legislative amendments to the *Real Estate Act* to ensure timely distribution of material.



#### c) Farm Side Good Neighbour Programmes

Several endeavours have been ongoing to encourage improved relationships between farmers and their neighbours and this is an explicit objective of the Farm Practices Protection Act. This is particularly the case with respect to agriculture and the environment. These efforts include the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation and Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management,

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the efforts of MAF and the ALC to develop a comprehensive buffering guide include consideration of further practical means that would enhance good neighbour relationships within the farm community.

the new Burning Code, and commodity-oriented Environmental Guidelines. Farmers and ranchers have been actively involved in programmes to enhance the awareness of agriculture through the efforts of commodity organizations and farmers' institutes, support for the Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation and farm tours. The work of peer advisors of the B.C. Federation of Agriculture and Cattlemen's Association, including their enhanced role associated with the new complaint process, provides a further example. Together these efforts form a package of MAF and industry-led initiatives to address relationships of farm operations with their farm neighbours and the environment.

To complement these efforts, and consistent with the objectives of the FPPA, it would be of value if further means were explored to enhance farm / farm neighbour relationships for the purpose of contributing to greater land use harmony.

Non-farm residents living in the ALR are very much a reality of B.C. agriculture. This is particularly true close to urban centres. The proposed comprehensive buffering guide (see: page 31) provides one opportunity to pursue "farm side" initiatives that will enhance awareness of agriculture and reduce the potential for conflict. A second approach, and a counterpart to any information packages that may be developed for non-farm residents living near or in the ALR, is to develop similar material for members of the farm community. The purpose would be to outline the concerns of non-farmers living in the ALR. Being aware of these concerns - real or perceived - could be a first step towards avoiding possible conflicts.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the ALC and MAF, in consultation with farm organizations and others, consider the development of information for the farm community to enhance awareness and understanding between the farm and non-farm interests in the ALR.

## **SUMMARY**

Agriculture is vulnerable at its point of interface with other land uses. The valley / mountain physiography within which much of British Columbia's agriculture is pursued has contributed to a lengthy and complex urban / rural edge. Yet to date there has been a woeful lack of attention paid to the development of land management policies directed at lessening the potential for land use conflict and enhancing the security of agriculture's working environment.

If land use compatibility is to be enhanced and greater land use certainty achieved, the agricultural interface must be recognized as a 'special' planning area requiring an intensive examination of current land use, the application of specific policies and, at times, physical works. Detailed inventory work, consultation and the adoption of land use policies through an edge planning programme are required to effectively improve existing situations and to lessen the potential for conflict as land use change occurs.

In some jurisdictions potential interface problems will be minimal. Other local governments will recognize that the areas requiring close attention along the interface are not only lengthy, but the finalization of an edge planning