



# District of Central Saanich Agricultural Area Plan

## Phase 3 Report Agricultural Area Plan

Submitted to:

**Agricultural Area Plan Steering Committee**  
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## Executive Summary

In 2010 the District of Central Saanich commissioned an Agricultural Area Plan to assist with the implementation of agricultural policies contained in the municipality's Official Community Plan (OCP) and as identified in the District's Strategic Plan (2009).

The Terms of Reference for the work state the scope of the Plan is to "...conduct a focused planning process to research, develop policy alternatives and identify tasks, conduct an extensive public review, and draft recommendations for an Agricultural Area Plan for the District. The goal is to ultimately adopt an AAP that will complement the OCP, define the municipality's role with respect to agriculture, and identify the priority actions necessary to support the viability of farming in the municipality that takes in the regional context and anticipates future changes. The District wishes to ensure that the agricultural capability of Central Saanich is realized and protected as part of a secure food supply for the region."

### ***The Planning Process***

The preparation of the Agricultural Area Plan was undertaken in three phases. Phase 1 was an extensive review of the status of agriculture in Central Saanich (Phase 1 Report: Central Saanich Agricultural Profile, May 2010). This report is based on Census of Agriculture (2006) data, literature research, interviews with agricultural sector interests and a workshop with agricultural stakeholders (March 2010).

The issues were further explored in the Phase 2: Issues and Options Report. A second workshop with agricultural stakeholders (November 2010) identified a number of options for dealing with issues identified in Phase 1. Objectives were developed in five key issue areas:

1. Support Designated Farmland Uses
2. Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR
3. Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise
4. Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base
5. Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture

### ***Agriculture in Central Saanich***

Western style agriculture has been practiced on the Saanich peninsula since shortly after the settlement of Victoria in 1841. Beginning in the 1860s, local food was grown to support the increasing population as settlers arrived. The historical Saanich Fair has been held in Central Saanich on Labour Day weekend since 1867.

Central Saanich agriculture has at various times comprised many farm types, including grain, dairy, poultry livestock, tree fruit, tree seed, field flowers/bulbs, nursery, and vegetable production. With changing farm economics, some farm types have declined and others have increased in number. Various agriculture-related services, including suppliers and processors, have come and gone.

The area has operated under a federal quarantine order since 1965, when the Golden Nematode was found in local potato fields, and this restriction has had significant impacts on crops grown and produced and local equipment movement ever since. Today, farm-direct marketing of local produce and specialty livestock products, wineries, horse and hobby farms are increasing while traditional larger

scale commercial produce operations are being threatened by competition from international suppliers. Most recently, non-farming uses are competing more intensively for farmland (e.g., lifestylers wanting rural estates, wildlife habitat, environmental protection, recreation).

The main characteristics of the Central Saanich agricultural sector today include:

- About 59% (2,908 ha) of the District is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- In 2006, 181 Census farms operated in Central Saanich on 5,510 acres (2,231 ha), including tame hay, non-crop cover, and farm yards
- Approximately 60% of the farmland base of Central Saanich is used as land for growing crops, including tame hay. Of the remainder, tame seeded pasture and natural pasture account for a further 19% of the land base.
- Agri-tourism and direct farm marketing is becoming more significant as farm operators attract tourists and the local public onto farms.
- Central Saanich farms generated about \$18.5 million in GFRs and represented about 34% of all agricultural revenue in the Capital Regional District.
- Agriculture creates community-based employment in the District represented by the self-employment of 265 operators on the 181 agricultural enterprises and the full-time equivalent of about 222 person years of work that resulted in wages and salaries of \$5.9 million.
- Farming enterprises generating between \$10,000 and \$50,000 in GFRs annually are estimated to account for about \$13 million of annual GFRs in Central Saanich. There is also a smaller percentage of farming enterprises (14%) that generated more than \$100,000 in GFRs and contributed farm revenues of about \$4.5 million.

Despite the favourable climate, the use of farmland and agricultural resources is deteriorating due to several factors:

- Soils being lost through conversion to non-farm uses (such as rural estates) and illegal soil filling
- Irrigation water is not available in all farming areas and, where it is, the costs are high
- Agricultural drainage and flood control is being compromised by urban storm water management and management of environmental areas
- Crop depredation by wildlife (especially deer and waterfowl) is occurring to the extent that farming viability is threatened
- With the shrinking of the local livestock sector, supplies of organic nutrients are not adequate to support field production
- Cheaper imports are making local agricultural products uncompetitive in the marketplace
- New farmers are having difficulty gaining entry into the sector, due to high land values and/or inability to locate lease land
- In 2005, the Central Saanich agricultural sector generated a combined gross margin of approximately zero. This means that after paying operating expense, farmers achieved no net income and no return to investment or management.

## ***The Agricultural Vision***

This Phase 3 report: Agricultural Area Plan is meant to be a strategic document to help improve the status of agriculture in Central Saanich. The Plan outlines a number of Guiding Principles and proposes a future vision for agriculture in Central Saanich:

*“Central Saanich is a place where agriculture is strong, vital and a productive part of the local economy – practiced in a manner that cultivates an integral connection between the community and the environment”*

*Desired Outcomes include:*

1. Sustainable, working agriculture is vibrant in Central Saanich, making an essential contribution to the District’s economy, environmental attributes and quality of life.
2. Agricultural land is productively farmed on farms of various sizes that are generating a diversity of agricultural products distributed through many channels to consumers.
3. Sustainable farming attracts new entrants and takes profitable advantage of local and regional marketing opportunities.
4. The agricultural sector is fully supported by the community.

## **Recommendations**

To achieve this vision, the Plan includes a number of recommended actions. As a municipality, Central Saanich has an important role to play in supporting agriculture, but agriculture is also very much affected by policies and regulations of senior levels of government and external market pressures. ***This is an extremely critical time as agriculture in Central Saanich is not only under stress but requires concrete action to reverse current economic trends and sustain its viability. The Saanich Peninsula and Central Saanich, in particular, are challenged by under-functioning organizations, mechanisms and financial models in support of agriculture.***

The Agricultural Area Plan is guided by the following strategic considerations:

- Local initiatives are required to promote CS agriculture
- Value adding is the key to improving the viability of agricultural enterprise
- Agricultural resources must be protected and enhanced in support of farming
- Regional initiatives are required to support Saanich Peninsula agriculture.

The following Executive Summary Table highlights priority action items that Central Saanich can begin to implement over the next five to six years. It is intended to provide direction in achieving the Vision and the Objectives of the Plan. The priorities attached to each action are meant to provide implementation guidance. The District of Central Saanich may decide to shift the relative priority based on various factors (e.g., availability of resources). As discussed in the Plan, the recommended actions include items that are the responsibility of Central Saanich, but others require regional and provincial action as well. Section 5 provides a full discussion of the objectives and actions and Section 6 outlines an implementation strategy. Section 7 identifies a number of performance indicators that can be used to monitor the implementation of the Plan. Appendix A includes a detailed listing of actions including implementation activities (responsible organizations, budget considerations).



**Executive Summary Table: Action Priorities for Implementing the Central Saanich Agricultural Area Plan**

Strategic Objective	Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Agencies Involved (1)
<b>First Level Priority</b>			
Reduce non-agricultural demand for farmland (Sect. 5.2.1, p. 13)	Consider ways to limit size of housing footprint through bylaw amendment Enforcement of regulations by ALC Create disincentives for non-farm use	Reduced rural estate development Reduced illegal use of the ALR	CS Collaborate with AAC ALC Lobby BCAA
Enhance the viability of agriculture in CS (Sect. 5.3.2, p. 15) (Sect. 5.3.3, p. 16) (Sect. 5.3.4, p. 17)	Adopt the Agricultural Plan and begin to implement the recommendations Create activity in support of value-added initiatives and on-farm innovation	Strategic direction set for agriculture Re-establish farmer confidence Increased agricultural business opportunities	CS Advocate with CRD and like-minded local municipalities
Improve communication between CS farmers and local government (Sect. 5.3.5, p. 17) (Sect. 5.3.6, p. 17)	Create an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)	More conducive environment for farming	CS
Improve communication between CS farmers and the public (Section 5.4, p. 19)	Develop a communications plan to inform the community about how impacts in water supply, drainage and flood control, wildlife, organic nutrients, rural transportation and other areas are affecting farming, discussing issues and possible solutions (possibly web-site based)	Greater public understanding wildlife issues Public interest in tangible support to agriculture	PAC AAC CS
Increase farming access to farmland and agricultural resources (Section 5.2.2, p. 14)	Create clearinghouse for rental farmland Create database of agricultural services, processing	More leasing opportunities Increased networking among agribusiness	CS
Promote agriculture in the Saanich Peninsula (Sect. 5.5.2, p. 22)	Seek regional AAC Develop fiscal responsibility for CRD in regional agriculture	Greater demand for local agricultural products More agriculture-related local business opportunities Stable mechanism providing tangible support to agriculture	Advocate with CRD
<b>Second Level Priority</b>			
Clarify characteristics of community supported agriculture (Sect. 5.1.1, p. 12)	Develop a definition of bona fide agriculture	Clear indication of land use preference in support of agriculture	Work with AAC Lobby BCAA

Strategic Objective	Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Agencies Involved (1)
Improve extension resources for farmers (Sect. 5.3.4, p. 17)	Develop local/regional agrologist capacity	Increased resources in support of farming	CRD Other municipalities BCMA IAF
Improve agricultural resources (Section 5.4.5, p. 21)	Seek commitment of household organic waste stream to agriculture	Local source of organic fertilizer	Advocate with CRD
Create a farm supportive regulatory environment (Section 5.3.5, p. 17) (Section 5.3.7, p. 17)	Undertake bylaw review and amendments once definition of bona fide farming is established	Supportive regulatory environment for farming in CS	Collaborate with AAC, Working group of farmers
Reduce urban –rural conflict (Section 5.3.6, p. 18)	Adopt MAL Edge Planning Guidelines	Increased buffering between farm and non-farm uses	CS
Reduce wildlife-agriculture impacts (Section 5.4.4, p. 20)	Engage public to accept financial responsibility Create mechanisms to mitigate damages Allow high fencing on farmland to deter wildlife	Compensation for damages Develop ecological goods and services approach to supporting agriculture New research and innovative approaches to reducing impacts	Advocate with CRD Lobby BCMA; MOE, CS
<b>Third Level Priority</b>			
Increase public awareness and appreciation for farming (Section 5.5.1, p. 22)	Develop a multi-partner communications plan to boost knowledge of local agriculture	Generate greater awareness of the role and value of agriculture in the community	CS; CRD; SVIDFMA; AAC; ADO; BCMA; SPCOC
Provide infrastructure to support agriculture (Section 5.4, p. 19)	Ensure that the needs of agriculture regarding farmland water supply, irrigation capacity, drainage issues and rural transportation servicing are addressed	Conditions created and maintained for efficient and economically sustainable agriculture	CS
Promote agriculture in the region (Section 5.5.2, p. 22)	Participate in initiatives with neighbouring municipalities and CRD Collaborate with businesses and other industry	Increased communication with local food industry, tourism Regional branding of agricultural products	CS, CRD, Other municipalities, Enterprising farmers Local businesses

(1) See List of Acronyms on page following



## Acronyms Used in the Agricultural Area Plan and Appendices

- AAC – Agricultural Advisory Committee (proposed)
- AAFC – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- ADO – Agricultural Development Office (proposed)
- ALC – Agricultural Land Commission
- ARDCORP – Agricultural Research and Development Corporation
- ARDSA - Agriculture and Rural Development Subsidiary Agreement, a federal-provincial program under which agricultural drainage and flood control criteria were developed
- BCAA – BC Assessment Authority
- BCAC – BC Agriculture Council
- BCATA – BC Agri-Tourism Association
- BCFPA – BC Food Processors Association
- BCMA – BC Ministry of Agriculture
- BMP – Beneficial Management Practice
- CFBMC – Canadian Farm Business Management Council
- CRD – Capital Regional District
- CR-FAIR – Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable
- CS – Central Saanich
- CSAEC – Central Saanich Agriculture Economic Commission (proposed)
- DFWT - Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust
- DFO – Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- EC - Environment Canada
- EFP – Environmental Farm Plan
- FCC – Farm Credit Canada
- GFRs – Gross Farm Receipts
- GVEDC – Greater Victoria Economic Development Commission
- GVDA – Greater Victoria Development Agency
- IAFBC – Investment Agriculture Foundation, BC
- ISMP – Integrated Stormwater Management Plan
- IVCA – Island Vegetable Co-op Association
- IFA – Island Farmers Alliance
- MOE – BC Ministry of Environment
- MOT – BC Ministry of Transportation
- N&SSAS – North & South Saanich Agricultural Society
- PAC – Peninsula Agricultural Commission
- SPCOC - Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
- SSFPA – Small Scale Food Processor Association
- SD – School District
- SVIFDMA – South Vancouver Island Farm Direct Marketing Association
- TVI – Tourism Vancouver Island
- TLC – The Land Conservancy
- UVIC – University of Victoria
- VAA – Victoria Airport Authority
- VREB – Victoria Real Estate Board

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The District of Central Saanich has commissioned this Agricultural Area Plan to assist with the implementation of agricultural policies contained in the municipality's Official Community Plan (OCP) and as identified in the District's Strategic Plan (2009).

The Terms of Reference for the work state the scope of the Plan is to "...conduct a focused planning process to research, develop policy alternatives and identify tasks, conduct an extensive public review, and draft recommendations for an Agricultural Area Plan for the District. The goal is to ultimately adopt an AAP that will complement the OCP, define the municipality's role with respect to agriculture, and identify the priority actions necessary to support the viability of farming in the municipality that takes in the regional context and anticipates future changes. The District wishes to ensure that the agricultural capability of Central Saanich is realized and protected as part of a secure food supply for the region."

This Phase 3 Report provides recommendations and implementation strategies for pursuing actions identified in Phases 1 and 2 of the project and further explored in workshops held with agricultural interests and other stakeholders in 2010. These reports are listed below.

- Phase 1 Report: Central Saanich Agricultural Profile, May 2010
- Phase 2 Report: Issues and Options Report, October 2010

All members of the Agricultural Area Plan Steering Committee and District Planning staff are recognized for their valuable contributions in the preparation of this Plan.

In addition, members of the community made themselves available for interviews that provided insight into agriculture challenges and opportunities in Central Saanich.

## **2.0 Key Highlights of Central Saanich Agriculture**

### ***2.1 Size of the Agricultural Land Base***

Central Saanich's agricultural sector represents the most pervasive land use in the District. About 59% (2,908 ha) of the District is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). In 2006, 181 Census farms operated in Central Saanich on 5,510 acres (2,231 ha), including non-crop cover and farm yards. About 27% of the parcels with land in the ALR also contain land not in the ALR.

### ***2.2 Use of the Agricultural Land Base***

Approximately 60% of the farmland base of Central Saanich is used as land for growing crops. Of the remainder tame seeded pasture and natural pasture account for a further 19% of the land base.

In addition, agri-tourism and direct farm marketing is becoming more significant as farm operators attract tourists and local public onto farms. Organic farming is increasing in Central Saanich in response to consumer demand for these products. However, 92% of organic operations were uncertified and almost half of those produced organic animals and animal products.

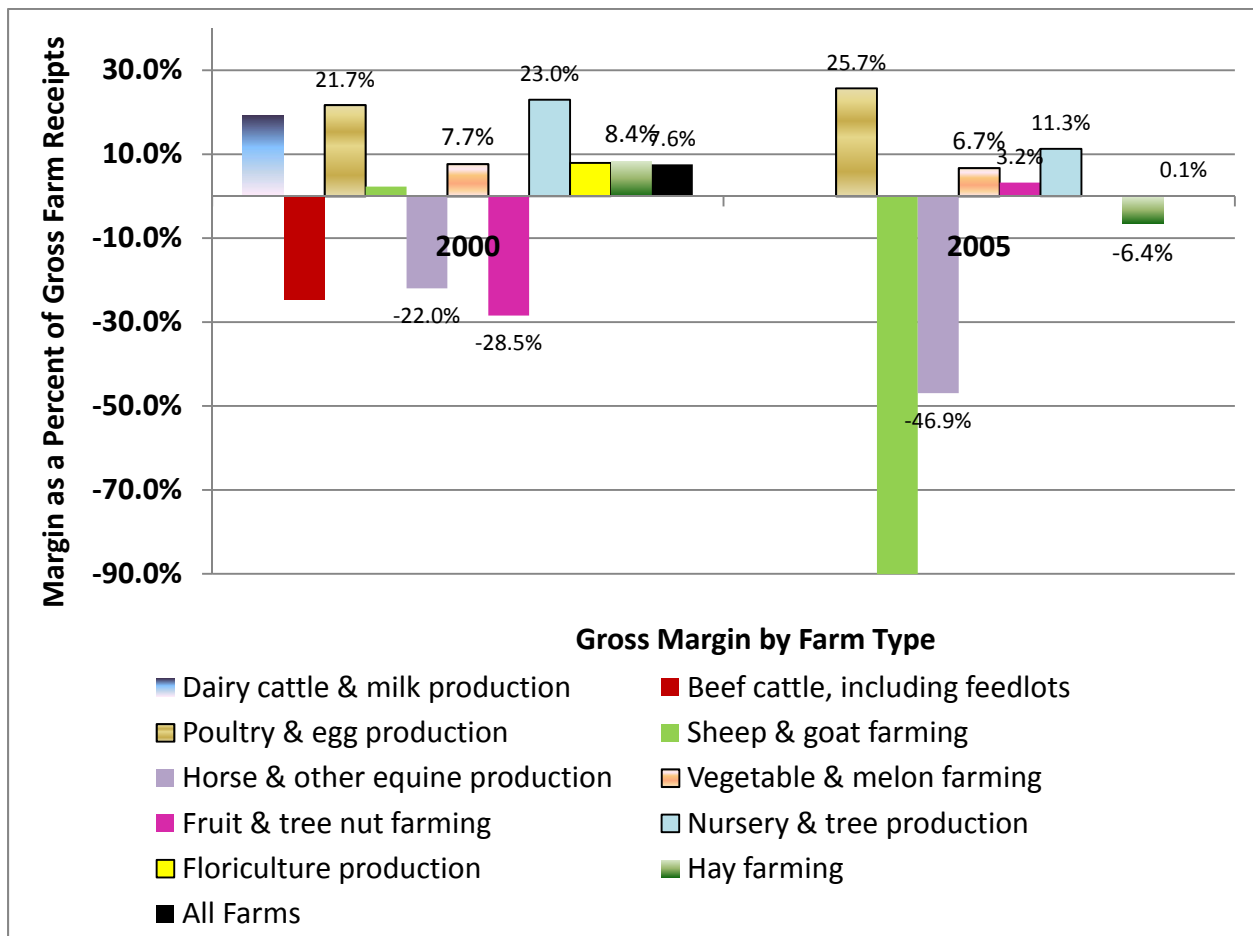
### ***2.3 Agricultural Economic and Employment Contribution***

Central Saanich farms generated about \$18.5 million in GFRs and represented about 34% of all agricultural revenue in the Capital Regional District.

Agriculture creates community-based employment in the District. In addition to the self-employment of 265 operators on the 181 agricultural enterprises, farmers in 2005 paid for the full-time equivalent of about 222 person years of work that resulted in wages and salaries of \$5.9 million paid by farm operators to workers on farms in the community. Roughly 79% of the paid labour requirement of Central Saanich farms is year-round.

### 2.4 Revenue Characteristics of Census Farmers

Over 50% of farms are less than 10 acres in size, 62% generate less than \$10,000 in gross farm receipts (GFRs) annually, and occupy less than 15% of the farmland base. This under \$10,000 category accounted for about \$1 million (5.4%) of the total GFRs generated in the District. Farming enterprises generating between \$10,000 and \$50,000 in GFRs annually are estimated to account for about \$13 million of annual GFRs in Central Saanich. There is also a smaller percentage of farming enterprises (14%) that generated more than \$100,000 in GFRs and contributed farm revenues of about \$4.5 million in 2006. **However, as a whole, the CS agricultural sector barely covered direct expenses, generated little gross margin and no return on investment (All Farms- 0.1%, in the Figure below). This situation has not changed to the present.**



## **2.5 Agricultural Resource Base**

Central Saanich is characterized by a cool Mediterranean climate influenced by its southerly latitude and proximity to the maritime coast. This represents the farthest pole-ward advance of a true Mediterranean climate on the earth's surface. The Central Saanich agricultural area has among the least limiting sub-classes in Canada, owing primarily to the mild and long frost free climate, high number of degree days, availability of irrigation water, gentle slopes to flat topography, and ability to control drainage and water table.

Soils in the District of Central Saanich exhibit some variability in capability, depending on location within the municipality due to limitations that are related, variously, to slope, drainage, flooding, stoniness, low water and nutrient holding capacity, aridity, and organic soils. Soils range from sandy and silty loams to clay and organic mucks. With improvements, all of these soil management groups may improved to the top agricultural productivity classes of farmland in Canada.

## **2.6 Lot Use and Farm Size Distribution**

Approximately 82% of Central Saanich farm area was owned by farm operators in 2005. About 51% of farms were less than 4 ha (10 ac) in size and only 8.8% of farms (16 farms) were 70 acres in size, or larger.

## **2.7 Farm Investment**

In 2005, 23% of farm operations had capital assets (including land) under \$500,000, while 19% of farms had capital assets greater than \$1.5 million. Land and buildings comprised almost 94% of the total farm value and represented among the highest ratios for land-to-total assets in farming in Canada.



## 3.0 Planning Framework

The Agricultural Area Plan is guided by the policies and bylaws of Central Saanich and the direction received during the stakeholder consultations in the community and from the advice and input of the Agricultural Area Plan Steering Committee. The OCP and Land Use Bylaw designates land uses, including agricultural land and also contains a vision and objectives and policies guiding municipal decisions and actions with respect to agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1 *Agricultural Principles and Policies of the OCP*

In Section 3.2.1 of the OCP, policies are outlined to protect agricultural land:

**Objective: To preserve lands with potential for agricultural production and to protect these areas from incompatible land uses.**

**Policy 1** Areas designated as Agriculture on Schedule A, Land Use Plan will be retained for agricultural uses over the long-term regardless of any changes that may be made by the Provincial Government with respect to the Agricultural Land Reserve.

**Policy 2** Applications for exclusion of lands from the Agriculture Land Reserve will not be supported by the District.

**Policy 3** Support the B.C. Agricultural Land Commission objective of retaining agricultural lands and consolidating them in large parcels to maintain their viability for agricultural use and further support consolidation of farmland.

**Policy 4** Further subdivision of agricultural lands is not supported. Amend the Land Use Bylaw to remove the distinction between A1 and A2 zones and increase minimum lot area to 20 hectares. Over 50% of the farms in Central Saanich are less than 4 hectares. While the District recognizes the contribution and viability of all sizes of farms in its jurisdiction, the policy endeavours to protect larger lot sizes

**Policy 5** For lands situated within the ALR, the provisions of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and those of the *Local Government Act* must be taken into account in any land use or building application being reviewed by the District of Central Saanich.

**Policy 6** Where possible, major roadways have been used to define the transition from Urban Settlement to Agriculture on Schedule A, Land Use Plan. Where this has not been possible due to existing land use patterns, agricultural uses may directly abut other development. The use of transitional elements such as additional hobby farms or small acreages is not supported.

**Policy 7** Land abutting ALR land is to include a buffer strip. Any new development on lands adjacent to ALR lands may be required to provide berms, landscaped buffer areas, and/or fencing next to the property line between the farm and the non-agricultural use. The land use bylaw specifies setback requirements for residential development adjacent to lands in the ALR.

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<sup>1</sup> The District of Central Saanich. Official Community Plan. Bylaw No. 1600. November 2008.

**Policy 8** New institutional buildings and uses such as schools, hospitals, residential care facilities, cultural facilities, fire or police services shall not be located within the Agricultural area.

**Policy 9** New roads, utility corridors or other public uses shall not be located on agricultural lands unless no suitable alternative exists. In those cases where no suitable alternative exists, land excluded from the ALR must be replaced with land of equal or greater agricultural value within the District of Central Saanich.

**Policy 10** The presence of institutional or recreational uses within the agricultural area shall not be considered as the basis for restriction or limitation of any farming activity.

**Policy 11** Amend the Land Use Bylaw to incorporate provincial standards that guide maximum lot coverage for non-agricultural buildings and structures associated with land uses in agricultural zones.

**Policy 12** Amend the Land Use Bylaw to limit the maximum size of residences in agricultural areas.

**Policy 13** Subdivisions for family members under section 946 of the *Local Government Act* are not supported.

**Objective: To ensure the sustainability and economic viability of the District of Central Saanich's farm community as an integral part of agriculture on the Saanich Peninsula.**

**Policy 1** Recognize and support normal farm practices as defined by the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* in the vicinity of residential areas. Central Saanich is a predominantly agricultural area, and certain uses with possible undesirable side effects, such as odours from fertilizers and animal noises are to be expected in an agricultural area. In the case of conflict with adjacent development, the agricultural use will be favoured.

**Policy 2** Support drainage, storm water management and irrigation projects that improve the productivity of farmland and participate in suitable programmes offered by senior government agencies. The District is participating in the development of an Integrated Storm Water Management Plan that will assist with the management of storm water and drainage issues on agricultural lands.

**Policy 3** Support and encourage agricultural activities by developing an Agricultural Area Plan for Central Saanich. This plan may, among other things, define legitimate farming, address factors that are increasing the cost of farmland, determine how to encourage farming and value-added food production and address the environmental management of farms.

**Policy 4** Through the agricultural area planning process, also investigate ways to support and maintain farm infrastructure in Central Saanich. Such infrastructure might include such activities as feed companies, auction houses, abattoirs, and cold storage or produce processing.

**Policy 5** Support in principle the diversification of the agricultural economy in Central Saanich, through such activities as farm-gate marketing and other agri-tourism opportunities that are ancillary to primary farming activities and do not impact the agricultural capability of farmland.



**Policy 6** Encourage the diversification of agricultural activity and products that show potential for economic viability.

**Policy 7** Continue to offer support for, and participation in, the Peninsula Agricultural Commission - the existing Saanich Peninsula agricultural advisory body that considers peninsula and regional farm issues.

**Policy 8** Support the use of a bulk agricultural water rate for farmers.

**Policy 9** Pursue regional discussions to determine suitable policy on Agri-tourism. This topic will also be addressed in the proposed Agricultural Area Plan.

**Policy 10** Develop an agricultural-industrial zoning designation to protect and encourage agriculture related industries in the Keating Industrial area and at other appropriate locations throughout the District (cross reference Section 5: Economic Development).

**Policy 11** Allow and support the development of regular farmers' markets including small pocket markets in existing parking lots and public spaces.

**Policy 12** In discussion with the appropriate Provincial authorities, develop criteria to guide the establishment and location of supportive, seasonal (temporary) farm worker housing. Also explore the need and opportunity for establishing long-term on-farm housing.

**Policy 13** In order to manage the golden nematode problem, encourage provincial and federal agencies to implement a regular monitoring programme in an effort to reduce the number of farms impacted by the existing quarantine measures.

**Policy 14** Explore and encourage alternative models of agricultural land ownership that support farming such as community farmland trusts.

**Policy 15** Support efforts to acquire and protect agricultural land within the community, in order to increase local sustainable food production and create opportunities for new farmers.

**Policy 16** As farm classification and related tax benefits are important incentives for farmers, advocate to ensure that any changes in tax policy or implementation of tax policy is not detrimental to the viability of farm operations or management and stewardship practices.

## **3.2 Proposed Guiding Principles**

In light of the issues that emerged from the workshops and consultations, several guiding principles are proposed to direct the Agricultural Area Plan and to assist with implementing the proposed Vision for Agriculture as identified through the agricultural area planning process. They are also consistent with the District's OCP policies identified above.

### **3.2.1 Viable Farming**

Interestingly, while the "buy local" movement is increasing, local products and associated storage facilities are not readily available in some part due to the limited profitability associated with growing,

handling, and marketing them. The preferred economic model for long term farming viability<sup>2</sup> embraces the principle that farming should be profitable for the farmer.

### **3.2.2 Sustainable Farming Operations**

Central Saanich seeks to support and promote agriculture that is sustainable in economic, environmental and social terms.<sup>3</sup> Pursuit of sustainability is the best way of creating conditions for a mutually beneficial coexistence between farms and urban residents and ensuring that agriculture is perceived by the general public as relevant to their wellbeing.

### **3.2.3 Productive Use of the Farmland**

There is strong support for maximizing the use of the ALR for farming purposes. With the notable exceptions (e.g., floriculture and tree nurseries), the markets for local agricultural products are local and regional. Local agriculture is seen as the answer to addressing food security while reducing society's carbon footprint.<sup>4</sup> Working agriculture<sup>5</sup> is the model with the greatest long term potential to attain community objectives for farmland. Acquisition of farmland for rural estates and other non-farm uses contributes no known advantages to farm productivity while hastening the decline of agriculture.

### **3.2.4 Protection of the Agricultural Land Base**

In spite of the protection afforded by the Agricultural Land Reserve designation, there is general concern that the agricultural land base is being eroded by non-farming encroachment, parcel fragmentation and isolation, and competition for resources. The guiding principle should be that the ALR is reserved for agriculture and that agriculture is the highest and best use of the land.

### **3.2.5 Agricultural Land Use Flexibility**

Farmers are challenged to adapt and respond to markets for local products in competition with global suppliers. Farmers need the ability to diversify their products, access new markets and add value in order to prosper. Regulations that affect farm operations should be clear, not overly burdening, and applied in a streamlined and cost-efficient manner, while protecting the capability of the agricultural land base. Support will consist of consideration under the umbrella of farm eligible activities (along with the exemptions such status confers) and agri-sensitive provisions at the local, regional and provincial levels to recognize the many faces and scales of farm-based activities.

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<sup>2</sup>A farm is defined as being economically viable when it generates enough revenue from its operations to cover all variable and fixed costs of production, all appropriate family living expenses, and capital replacement costs. See Adelaja, S. 2005. Agricultural Viability at the Urban Fringe. Presentation at Emerging Issues along Urban/Rural Interfaces: Linking Science and Society. Atlanta, Georgia, March 15.

<sup>3</sup>Sustainable agriculture is: The application of husbandry experience and scientific knowledge of natural processes to create agriculture and agri-food systems that: a) are economically viable; b) meet society's need for safe and nutritious food; c) promote vibrant rural communities; and d) conserve enhance natural resources and the environment. (From: Agricultural Institute of Canada. 2005. Big Farms, Small Farms: Strategies for sustainable agriculture to fit all sizes.)

<sup>4</sup>Geggie, L. and K. Platt. 2009. Our Farmlands, Our Foodlands, Our Future: a findings report on tools and strategies for ensuring productive and accessible farmlands in the CRD. Victoria.

<sup>5</sup>The term "working agriculture" is defined as agriculture where an operator tries to make money on his/her land in contrast to a property owner who spends money on the land in a non-profit capacity. Revenue Canada uses the definition of agricultural activity carried out as a business with an expectation of profit.

### **3.2.6 Compensating Farmers for Providing Ecological Goods and Services**

In the interests of societal fairness and equitability, the principles of reasonable compensation and mitigation should be provided to private farmland owners for ecological goods and services their farms provide. For example, in cases where environmental benefits result in agricultural damages beyond the farmer's ability to control (e.g., wildlife damage), compensation should be commensurate with damages sustained to farming operations.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.2.7 Bona Fide Agriculture**

For the purposes of guiding municipal support for local agriculture, bona fide agricultural activities are those recognized as permitted uses of farmland and bona fide agricultural operations are those in which the principal source of income is from agricultural activities.

These principles convey a need for active community participation in ensuring the long term sustainability of agriculture in Central Saanich. The principles also identify a requirement for direct involvement of the District to assist in enabling agriculture to be productive. There is a challenge to farmers to demonstrate through their efforts and actions that support for agriculture is worthwhile.

## **3.3 A Vision for Agriculture in Central Saanich**

Based on an analysis of issues, existing policies and proposed guiding principles, a vision is proposed for agriculture in Central Saanich. While the OCP outlines policies to promote and protect agriculture, a vision describes a desired future state for agriculture in the municipality.

*“Central Saanich is a place where agriculture is strong, vital and a productive part of the local economy – practiced in a manner that cultivates an integral connection between the community and the environment”*

*Desired Outcomes include:*

- 1. Sustainable, working agriculture is vibrant in Central Saanich, making an essential contribution to the District's economy, environmental attributes and quality of life.**

Sustainable agriculture possesses several fundamental characteristics: farm profitability leading to economic viability, environmental stewardship resulting in ecological soundness, and social well-being for all participants in the system.

- 2. Agricultural land is productively farmed on farms of various sizes that are generating a diversity of agricultural products distributed through many channels to consumers.**

All scales of farming are apparent in Central Saanich producing a diversity of products and services using a variety of business models from conventional full time farming to part-time, smaller scale and community based farming. It also recognizes that agricultural land is being productively used for bona fide agriculture.

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<sup>6</sup> Federal-provincial programs in other areas of BC and provinces in Canada provide compensation for wildlife damage to crops and predation of livestock. An important component of these programs is a damage assessment mechanism used by experienced adjustors to calculate loss, based on crop quality and current value.

**3. Sustainable farming attracts new entrants and takes profitable advantage of local and regional marketing opportunities.**

Sustainable farming will be characterized by the creation of a resilient food production system in the community, providing food security and beneficial agricultural land use. In particular, agriculture will attract and support new and young entrepreneurs.

**4. The agricultural sector is fully supported by the community.**

The community will assist in protecting the land base, providing essential agricultural infrastructure, such as regional drainage, flood control, and irrigation and protect the resource base by ensuring that the conditions for working agriculture are maintained and enhanced. Most importantly, there is high awareness of the importance of agriculture in the community and strong demand for local agricultural products and services. The regulatory process is supportive of agriculture and there exists a well-developed local storage, handling, distribution, processing and marketing infrastructure as a cornerstone of the local food system.



## 4.0 Findings of Investigations

The information generated in the planning process has directed the content of the Agricultural Area Plan.

### 4.1 Findings from Phase 1

The Phase 1 Report: Agricultural Profile has revealed that the Central Saanich agricultural sector wishes to see a concerted effort to protect, enhance, and promote agriculture in the District. There is an expectation that traditional farming models will not be as applicable in the future and that alternative models with new and multiple objectives should be pursued.

Key observations emerged from investigations and sector consultations that will guide the agricultural area planning process.

#### Strengths and Opportunities

Central Saanich Agriculture has the following strengths:

- Central Saanich agricultural area has among the least limiting soil sub-classes in Canada, owing primarily to the mild and long frost free climate, high number of degree days, availability of irrigation water, gentle slopes to flat topography, and ability to control drainage and water table. While some soils require more intensive management, the climatic capability of CS is such that all of these soil management groups may improved to the top agricultural productivity classes of farmland in Canada.
- Proximity to a large affluent and food conscious urban population provides huge market opportunities for agriculture. Currently, local food production accounts for less than 5% of total market demand.
- There is a market trend favouring local produce produced under organic and natural protocols. Central Saanich farmers are well-positioned to capitalize on this opportunity by producing a diverse range of high quality products that are fresher, safer, and healthier by virtue of being local.

#### Weaknesses and Threats

Central Saanich agriculture faces significant issues and challenges related to maintaining its continued health, growth, and viability.

- Although Central Saanich's cropland is commonly perceived as having a fresh produce focus for the local market, about 54% of the cropped area is in tame hay grown for the local livestock and equine feed market. The farmland base used for crops, other than tame hay, represented less than 30% of the total farm area. About 21% of the farms did not have any land in crops and were kept in tame seeded pasture, natural pasture, woodlands and wetlands
- In 2006, the last year for which revenue statistics are available, the agricultural sector barely covered direct expenses, generated little gross margin, and no return on investment. Moreover, floriculture operations alone contributed over 40% of the total gross margin in the District. A concern among farmers is the ongoing viability of agriculture.

- While agri-tourism and on-farm marketing venues are offering opportunities for enterprising operators, they are not perceived as the panacea for the bulk of the agricultural sector in Central Saanich. Agritourism does not appear to be able to provide the market channel for high volume local produce marketing and on-farm tourist activities are already creating farming impacts in the District, such as rural traffic congestion.
- Agricultural production is one-dimensional, with over-reliance on the fresh market sector. Regional and on-farm agricultural processing, which would increase farm gate revenues and create value added markets for in the sector, is under developed.
- The Saanich peninsula is a manure deficit area. Without a local source of organic nitrogen and phosphate, organic operations are challenged to obtain nutrients for their crops at reasonable cost. There is interest in obtaining composted household organics and other materials for agricultural applications.
- Restrictions have been in effect on types of field crops grown in Central Saanich due to infestation by Golden Nematode, a quarantine pest. There are ongoing investigations to determine if the ban on the production of potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and eggplant can be relaxed in the near future which would greatly increase cropping options for local farmers.
- Supply of irrigation water at reasonable cost is a key factor influencing agricultural productivity. While the regional supply of irrigation water has been improved, farmers are challenged by costs.
- Due to the undulating topography, water management is a factor in some agricultural areas. Achieving balance among drainage, irrigation capacity, conservation and environmental objectives is an ongoing challenge requiring consideration in support of agriculture. Soil erosion is also a concern in some areas due to topography, drainage and farming practices.
- Waterfowl and deer predation of agricultural crops has reached crisis levels. Farmers either need relief from this damage or compensation for providing ecological goods and services to the general public. Other emerging issues include potential human safety and health issues associated with over populated wildlife.

## **4.2 Findings from Phase 2**

The Phase 2 Report: Issues and Options examined a range of key issues emerging from the background research, Agricultural Profile, workshop with agricultural interests in March, 2010 and interviews with a range of agricultural producers. A full array of potential options for addressing key issues was also presented in the report. A second workshop with agricultural stakeholders was held in November 2010 with the objective of reviewing and prioritizing the key issues and options. Based on a review of the issues and discussions of potential options, five core objectives have emerged for which recommended actions (Section 5 and 6 of this Plan) have been developed:

- Support Designated Farmland Uses
- Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR
- Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise
- Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base
- Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture

## 5.0 Action Framework

The sustainability and future viability of agriculture in the Central Saanich is a shared responsibility. The District, through its Official Community Plan and various bylaws plays a strong role in some key areas related to the goals of the Agricultural Plan. In particular, through its OCP, Central Saanich can help protect the resource base upon which agriculture depends. It can also assist with facilitating a “sustainable agriculture” culture that benefits the entire community by protecting the resource base, furthering economic viability, creating employment, and enhancing the rural character and environmental attributes of the municipality.

While the District plays an integral role in the sustainability of agriculture, the community also faces external factors which it does not have control over. These include pressures from regional population growth, agricultural commodity markets, and policies of senior governments. Some issues that affect agriculture are a result of historical settlement patterns and land use – environmental reserves, small lots, ALR boundaries, water drainage and flood control patterns.

The following recommendations are meant to provide direction to Central Saanich in implementing the Agricultural Plan. In some instances, the District will play a lead role, in others a support role. The timeframe (immediate, short, medium and long term) for implementation is identified, along with the priority for action (high, medium, low). More detail is provided in Appendix A.

### 5.1 Objective #1: Support Designated Farmland Uses

Many farmland activities are granted farm tax status in recognition that farming provides a valuable service to society, but at a lower rate of return on land than competing uses, and generally with a requirement for fewer services. Farm tax status results in lower taxes for carrying on defined agricultural activities subject to farm size and income thresholds. Complications arise where the type and intensity of farmland use qualifies for favourable farm tax treatment but the land is being held for ulterior motives, such as for speculation or rural-residential purposes. These situations often result in land use conflicts and competition for the land for non-farming purposes. Indirectly, these impacts create uncertainty of the future in farming areas and threaten the integrity of the farmland base.

#### 5.1.1 Action Area #1: Defining Bona Fide Farming

The central concern relating to defining a bona fide farm is that the benefits provided to farming be received by those that legitimately farm. There is interest in closing loopholes to “hobby” farmers and estate property owners that acquire farm status to gain what are considered to be unwarranted tax benefits.

#### **Recommendations**

Actions that would assist in clarifying the definition of bona fide agriculture include:

- Develop a municipal definition of bona fide farming to use as a guideline in regulating farmland use, in consultation with farmers (could be AAC driven)
- Lobby BCAA and ALC to develop a coordinated approach to bona fide farming that supports farming in relation to what is produced on the farm and to a level of time commitment and proportion of annual gross income
- Lobby the ALC to clarify agri-tourism activities and extent so that Central Saanich can create a more efficient administrative process for reviewing and permitting proposed agri-tourism related ventures within the municipality

- Lobby BCAA for changes in farm tax assessment to define acceptable products/processes and include value-added and agri-tourism products in determining primary production gross income
- Lobby ALC, BCAA and BCMA for an integrated review of regulation and policies affecting small scale farmers
- In consultation with farmers (could be AAC driven), develop a policy on ancillary use of farm structures for non-farm purposes
- Lobby BCAA to develop a special tax classification for farmland favourable to farmers that hold land in a natural state providing environmental goods and services.

## **5.2 Objective #2: Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR**

While activities promoting local food security, improved community health and increased food access are ongoing in the Capital Regional District, the food production sector is not responding effectively to local food demand and security concerns. In fact, a significant proportion of the farmland base is not being used productively at all. Diversifications to improve farm incomes are focusing on farm-direct marketing, and agritourism (e.g. bed and breakfasts) to supplement returns from primary agricultural production.

### **5.2.1 Action Area #2: Reduce Non-Farm Use of Farmland**

Overall agricultural productivity in Central Saanich is declining in large part due the demand for agricultural land by competing uses. Rural residential use of farmland is encroaching into farming areas, with the associated de-intensification or withdrawal of farmland for agricultural pursuit. Non-resident ownership of farmland is resulting in “holding” patterns of agricultural use (e.g., idle land, low intensity use, no new structures) prior to rural-residential development.

#### **Recommendations**

Actions to reduce the impact of non-farming land use include:

- Consider ways to restrict house size to minimize the loss of productive farmland to residential uses
- Lobby province/ALC to consider restrictions on new rural residential construction in the ALR in favour of bona fide farmers with record of appropriate farm income for a suitable period of time
- Lobby the province to investigate the feasibility of requiring longer term farm rental agreements to be registered on title in order for landlord to acquire tax status for the farmland
- Lobby the province to restrict land under a rural-residential dwelling from being eligible for farm tax classification unless the resident is employed in agriculture on the farm to which the residence is attached
- Apply to the ALC to have all lands in the District receiving farm assessment status to be included in the ALR
- Consider establishing an agricultural impact assessment requirement for new rural-residential construction
- Recommend stewardship responsibilities for property owners in agriculture areas on how their lands should be maintained, e.g., by using existing provisions of the Weed Control Act; developing a Code of Farmland Stewardship for non-farm use in the ALR.



### **5.2.2 Action Area #3: Lower Barriers and Reduce Constraints to Farmer Access to Farmland**

Farmland adjacent to urban areas everywhere is subject to non-farming pressures that commonly result in farmland values that exceed their value based on agricultural production and creates access barriers for farmers. Leasing farmland from landowners who are not farming their land is one of the more affordable ways to obtain access to land in high real estate value regions of the Saanich Peninsula. Rental farmland is also attractive to new farmers who may not be a position to tie up large amounts of capital in land assets. The objective is to ensure that the maximum amount of farmland is in its most productive use regardless of ownership.

#### ***Recommendations***

Actions include:

- Investigate the feasibility of encouraging landlords, possibly through tax benefits or other incentives, to enter into longer term arrangements that would provide security to would-be farmers and facilitate more intensive agricultural operations
- Create a website or organization-based farmland clearinghouse or land registry for linking a database of potential tenants to a database of potential landlords
- Investigate initiatives to encourage established farmers to take on apprentices so that skills may be transmitted to the next generation
- Lobby for CRD purchase of farmlands into a Farmland Trust for rental farmers, community allotment gardening, agricultural demonstration and education
- Lobby BCMA, with PAC assistance, to undertake a small scale agriculture needs analysis
- Encourage Land Trusts to preserve farmland in the municipality for the purpose of increasing agricultural activity and making it available under lease agreement to farmers.

### **5.2.3 Action Area #4: Reduce Wasteful Use of Farmland**

Non-farm development tends not to consider the value of the underlying farmland beyond its real estate value. This may lead to excessive footprint and intrusive siting of buildings and access. Non-farm use of farmland for rural-residential purposes has been characterized by large building footprints and wasteful estate siting of access and structures.

#### ***Recommendations***

Actions to reduce the wasteful use of farmland resources include:

- Develop home plate specifications or otherwise limit the size of the building footprint and siting of structures and access in the ALR<sup>7</sup>
- Require site plan approvals for non-farm residential development on farmland to protect existing agricultural activities and potential future agricultural land uses
- Adopt provincial standards for maximum lot coverage.

## **5.3 Objective #3: Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise**

Agricultural enterprise in Central Saanich is experiencing the same downward economic trend as BC as a whole. The majority of farms are facing profitability challenges on an annual basis. While diversification (e.g., direct farm marketing and agritourism) is being exploited by some farmers, it is not deflecting non-farming pressure on Central Saanich farmland and initiatives are required to assist commercial producers of primary agricultural production to improve sector viability.

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of this Plan, the BCMA is investigating the feasibility of applying a home plate concept to the ALR.

### **5.3.1 Action Area #5: Counteracting the Impact of High Farmland Values**

Some escalation of prices is attributable to farmers competing among themselves for land, but a more important factor is that farmland is desirable for non-farming (residential) estates as well as a vehicle for profit from land speculation. Strategies employed in virtually every jurisdiction in North America, including BC, have systems to reduce the property tax cost with the objective of reducing the holding cost of farmland by farmers, making farming more viable.

#### ***Recommendations***

Actions to counteract the impact of demand for farmland reflected in high farmland prices range from stalling or delaying development to strategies that ensure farmland is preserved in perpetuity. Many of these options would likely require policy action with financial implications at the provincial level, while the tools available at the local level generally require a level of commitment and/or expenditure that many municipalities would be challenged to provide. Actions include:

- Advocate with the CRD for lower agricultural water rates
- Lobby province to develop farm tax classification for structures used in primary and value added agricultural production in bona fide agricultural enterprises
- Create a public regional farmland trust to purchase of land or covenants by municipal and/or regional governments (Regional Acquisition Fund) for lease or resale to farmers, using a designated property tax to generate funds
- Lobby the province to create financial deterrents, profit recapture taxes, or penalties applied to farmland sales for non-agricultural land use
- Lobby the province to consider setting up an agricultural land bank to purchase farmland from retiring farmers and sell to new entrants.

### **5.3.2 Action Area #6: Improve Access to the Local Food System**

Most food produced in Central Saanich is marketed locally in its fresh state to local wholesale/retail, and competing in undifferentiated form with imports (but with exceptions). Alternative food marketing channels, such as farm-direct markets, Farmers' markets, non-profit food share cooperatives, urban delivery, allotment gardens, and backyard gardening, can be more financially lucrative. However, it would appear that quantum improvements in local food system access will have to also include main marketing channels for Central Saanich agricultural food producers. Many of these initiatives may be beyond the capacity of local government to lead and could require regional strategizing and collaboration to implement over the long term.

#### ***Recommendations***

Actions to address gaps in accessing the local food system include:

- Advocate with the CRD to establish a year-round covered farmers market(s) in Victoria or other central marketing location
- Deliver irrigation capability to all farmland at affordable cost
- Support initiatives to attract local and/or regional value-added activity by various means, including tax exemptions, designating and providing agri-industrial parks and services
- Collaborate to assess the business feasibility of a local or regional (possible co-op) food handling facility and options for developing centralized infrastructure to support local marketing channels, such as handling and staging facilities, cold storage, heated warehouse space
- Encourage institutions by creating incentives to buy local produce (e.g., procurement policies by institutions - 50% min. local)
- Create incentives for local retailers to sell local agricultural products

- Investigate the marketing benefit of a Saanich Peninsula brand<sup>8</sup>, possibly in collaboration with North Saanich and IFA.

### 5.3.3 Action Area #7: Increase Value-Added Agricultural Activity in the Region

Local processing, which would increase the marketing window of many agricultural products, has further declined in response to competitive pressures exerted by globalization of the food supply system and the higher costs of local processing. The need to encourage farm product processing and other value-added opportunities has been recognized for some time as a way to increase economic viability.<sup>9</sup> In many jurisdictions, agricultural value-added is part of an economic development strategy for the rural area. Where agritourism is prominent, the concept of value-added is expanding beyond the notion of processing primary production to include other marketable benefits such as cultural experience, local healthy food, agricultural diversity and resilience, rural setting, food safety, and protecting farmland. *Farmers need to get into the processing part of the food business because that is where profit margins and stability are maximized.*

#### Recommendations

Actions to attract and enhance value-added opportunities include:

- Develop a database of local on-farm and commercial processing facilities on the peninsula
- Pursue establishment of an Agriculture Development Office (ADO), ideally CRD based, with a mandate to improve communication, promote agricultural business development, spearhead agricultural initiatives, and identify and access funding opportunities on the Saanich Peninsula
- Investigate the feasibility of pursuing community kitchen/other shared processing initiative to encourage local value-added opportunities
- Pursue funding and partners to pilot test community based value-added initiatives, including meat processing
- Encourage collaboration of farmers, CRD, SSFPA, VIHFC, IAFBC, institutions, and senior governments to identify value-added agricultural opportunities supporting local economic development
- Promote agricultural processing in any future CS economic development strategy
- Engage ALC in discussions re: ALC regulations on on-farm processing
- Lobby senior governments for more farm-friendly processing regulations
- Investigate the feasibility of developing appropriate agri-industrial capacity in Central Saanich, possibly with incentives to attract investment.<sup>10</sup>

### 5.3.4 Action Area #8: Encourage On-Farm Innovation

Innovation can occur in many ways – through, for example, distribution and marketing, agri-tourism, and value-added products. Innovation enhances farm profitability and viability and utilizes the ability of farmers to develop entrepreneurial ideas, gain useful marketing and business management skills, and

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that North Saanich's Agricultural Plan recommends a branding strategy to reinforce the municipality's agricultural identity. The agricultural stakeholder workshop recommended more use of the "Rooster" brand on local goods

<sup>9</sup> Brown, K., P. Hesje and R. Scott. Strategic Working Group Report: Strengthening local agriculture – farmland and farmers.

<sup>10</sup> Section 3.2.2 (policy 10) of the OCP anticipates an opportunity develop an agricultural-industrial zoning designation to protect and encourage agriculture related industries in the Keating Industrial area and at other appropriate locations throughout the District.

access capital. A significant amount of innovation has occurred in the Central Saanich agriculture sector in response to consumer appetite for local produce, emerging trends towards wine tourism, and agri-tourism. In fact, Central Saanich is a leader in the concentration of such enterprises in the area. However, the performance of larger scale operations is also absolutely vital to the sector as a whole since they represent the bulk of the capacity in the system and control the largest land holdings.

### **Recommendations**

Actions should focus on the success characteristics of the new farmer of the future and would include expanding the knowledge base for large and small scale operators:

- Lobby the province to re-instate a local agricultural extension function for the Saanich Peninsula
- Lobby FCC to sponsor new affordable financial supports for innovators in new farm types. This could include assisting low asset new entrants with operating loans where high land values preclude land ownership
- Lobby the province and industry to develop outreach and educational programs in developing marketing skills, food safety practices, regulations, and requirements that would have a positive impact in promoting alternative enterprises.

### **5.3.5 Action Area #9: Address Regulatory Barriers to Farming**

Farmers have identified a spectrum of federal, provincial, regional and municipal regulation governing agricultural uses. In many cases, the requirements affecting the multiple land uses conducted by farmers are scattered in legislation, various bylaws, zoning regulations and guidelines. Farmers have to keep abreast of provisions and definitions governing farm retail and advertising signage, health and fire codes, agri-tourism, labour and housing, permits for assembly, farm stands, directional signage, and setbacks. Farmers attempting to work their way through the regulatory system can be shuffled from regulation to regulation, from department to department, and from agency to agency, often by those with incomplete understanding of the effects of the process on working farms.

### **Recommendations**

The desired focus is to make the regulatory system more responsive to the needs of the agricultural sector while meeting its regulatory objectives. Actions to improve this system include:

- Continue to encourage farm operations to complete and implement EFPs, including the use of BMPs to improve agricultural operations and provide environmental benefits
- Engage farmers in review of regulations and development affecting agriculture
- Improve accessibility to Municipal Hall by establishing a 'Farm Liaison' in the planning department with agrologist credentials
- Provide pre-application assistance to farmers requiring approvals for farm related structures and other works that fall under municipal authority
- Establish a Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) to advise the municipality on issues affecting local agriculture
- Explore the feasibility of designating land in the A-1 zone as a Temporary Use Permit area for commercial composting and, in consultation with farmers, set criteria to ensure benefits accrue to farming
- Initiate a review of regulations affecting farmland to streamline regulations governing processing, composting, and distribution in the ALR and on farmlands.

### **5.3.6 Action Area #10: Managing the Rural-Urban Interface**

Central Saanich is essentially a mature municipality in that it is built out within its urban containment boundary. It has a long rural-urban boundary, or edge, with little in the way of historical buffers

separating agriculture from suburban residential land use. Parcels are generally small with increased potential for land use impacts between property owners. Incompatible land within farming areas are increasing as rural-residential encroaches into the ALR.

### **Recommendations**

Numerous actions are available to improve management of the rural-urban interface in support of more productive use of farmland, including the following:

- Encourage farmers to notify neighbours of upcoming activities/farming operations that may create unexpected situations
- Establish rural block watches along the rural –urban fringes to help educate and monitor good neighbour behaviour among both farmers and non-farmers
- Request that realtors disclose to potential buyers of properties adjacent to the ALR that farming operations occur on the adjacent properties
- Encourage rural-residential developers in the ALR to construct and maintain buffers on their properties so as not to infringe on adjacent agricultural operations
- Develop a plan to fund and establish a network of community supported agro-forestry and orchard land to form an agriculturally productive greenbelt system to enhance urban containment and buffer farm operations from urban complaints.

### **5.3.7 Action Area #11: Supporting Sustainable Rural Tourism**

Sustainable agritourism should enhance the business of farming and is supported in the BC Agricultural Plan. In most cases, agritourism makes an important economic contribution to farming in the urban fringe by responding to broader public preferences than farmland protection. While implicitly agritourism should benefit the agricultural sector, there is concern that it is causing negative spill over impacts into the farming community. In other cases, agritourism enterprises are often accepted as bona fide agriculture or regarded as legitimate businesses.

### **Recommendations**

Several actions to promote sustainable rural tourism initiatives are recommended:

- Review municipal regulations with regard to agri-tourism
- Lobby the province to develop a definition of appropriate agri-tourism activities on farmland that should be supported under the Farm Practices Protection Act
- Develop an agri-tourism handbook that assists operators to identify and address regulations and prepare guidelines to ensure that agri-tourism complements the agricultural community and has linkages to local agricultural organizations
- Develop a process for assessing the incremental and cumulative impacts of proposed agri-tourism development.

### **5.4 Objective #4: Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base**

Much of the infrastructure for agriculture, with the exception of flood control, drainage and irrigation works, has developed historically in response to incremental increases in demand. Some of this infrastructure is in need of repair or improvement to maintain efficient operating conditions. Planned infrastructure is more effective in delivering needed services efficiently and agriculture must have appropriate infrastructure works to maintain farm viability. As agricultural operations have intensified, infrastructure needs have risen and the scale of requirements has increased. Agricultural requirements now require more coordination with other resource uses and impending changes associated with climate change. Environmental and conservation considerations will influence how agriculture continues to utilize resources responsibly into the future.

### **5.4.1 Action Area #12: Availability of Agricultural Water Resources**

Water is indispensable for crop and livestock production. The supply system for agricultural water in Central Saanich is capable of providing agriculture's needs. Challenges are to ensure that the drainage and flood control systems for farmlands are efficient in providing the conditions for productive agriculture and that adequate water is reserved to support agriculture into the future.

#### ***Recommendations***

Provision of well-functioning water supply infrastructure is a critical condition for ensuring the continued viability of agricultural production. Actions include:

- Continue the water balance project with BCMA
- Advocate for implementation of best management plans for irrigation and water conservation on farms
- Explore feasibility of expanding farmland access to water supply and increasing irrigation capacity
- Support efforts to reserve agricultural water for farmland in the ALR including, where appropriate, on-farm storage.

### **5.4.2 Action Area #13: Agricultural Drainage and Flood Control**

Drainage is one of the critical components of water infrastructure, as freeboard is mandatory to create conditions for root growth and flood control on farmlands during the growing season is absolutely necessary to support productive agriculture. Agriculture must accommodate riparian area management and watershed stewardship through the adoption of best management practices respecting farm ditches, ditch maintenance, stream bank re-vegetation, sediment control, livestock watering, and setbacks.

#### ***Recommendations***

Provision of well-functioning drainage and flood control infrastructure is a necessary condition for ensuring the continued viability of agricultural production. Actions include:

- Ensure that implementation of Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP) recommendations benefits agriculture and ISMP matters are referred to the AAC
- Develop an agricultural drainage plan that addresses drainage issues on farmland areas of Central Saanich, while continuing to provide associated wildlife habitat values
- Investigate the feasibility of implementing ARDSA drainage and flood control criteria for farmland, which accommodates flood events with timely drawdown.

### **5.4.3 Action Area #14: Rural Transportation and Traffic Routes**

The frequency of traffic through farmland has increased significantly. The increase is related to a variety of factors including: truck routing, increased rural-residential populations, agritourism, and commuters taking back roads through the ALR. In Central Saanich, land use in the ALR needs to be carefully considered in relation to traffic to ensure that the transportation systems are capable of meeting agricultural requirements in a safe and timely fashion.

#### ***Recommendations***

Provision of well-functioning transportation infrastructure is a necessary condition for ensuring the continued viability of agricultural operations and can be strategic to some degree in influencing, directing, and encouraging certain types of agriculture into specific areas. Actions include:

- Develop a rural transportation servicing plan for agriculture and require transportation proposals undergo an agricultural impact assessment to identify impacts and mitigation measures
- Incorporate agricultural considerations (including on-farm marketing) in planning and designing transportation corridors in the ALR to facilitate farmland access and minimize farming operations disruption
- Develop initiatives to facilitate sharing of roads in agricultural areas by non-farm traffic and tractors/farm equipment.

#### **5.4.4 Action Area #15: Wildlife and Invasive Species**

Resident geese and habituated deer are creating significant impacts on field crops in Central Saanich. Other species that have become problematic where populations are over-abundant include starlings and raccoons. As a principle, reasonable compensation and mitigation should be provided for the public ecological goods and services provided, in the interests of societal fairness and equitability.

##### ***Recommendations***

Several options for addressing over-abundant wildlife population problems are identified and include:

- Continue to participate in regional initiatives (such as with Victoria Airport Authority) and environment agencies (e.g., Environment Canada, MOE) to seek management solutions to controlling over-abundant waterfowl populations
- Develop a public communications instrument to inform the community about how wildlife is affecting farming, discussing issues, and possible solutions (possibly web-site based)
- Lobby the province to re-instate the exclusion fencing BMP in the Environmental Farm Plan program to control deer predation of agricultural crops
- Amend the Land Use Bylaw to exempt deer fencing on farmland within the ALR from height restrictions
- Lobby the province to have Central Saanich included a provincial waterfowl damage compensation area and provide a compensation program for crop damage to farmers, through participation in federal –provincial waterfowl damage compensation programs
- Advocate with the CRD for regionally-based ecological goods and services levies to support conservation programs on farmland
- Lobby the MOE to develop carrying capacity parameters and population management strategies for over-abundant species in the District, including consideration of strategies used in other jurisdictions and to develop a peninsula-wide management strategy for over-abundant alien and invasive species
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a farmland-wildlife stewardship organization that pays organization that delivers programs paying farmers for valued ecological goods and services (e.g., DFWT)
- Engage with environmental agencies to establish a management protocols for a resident waterfowl/wildlife category that allows culling to manage populations, in association with a local food access and security program
- Encourage research into integrated farm-level strategies to mitigate or eliminate the potential for damages during the growing season when susceptibility to loss or damage poses the greatest threat to farm viability.

### **5.4.5 Action Area #16: Organic Nutrients for Agricultural Production**

In recent years, agricultural operations in the Saanich Peninsula have increasingly embraced organic and “natural” production practices in response to local demand for these perceived safer and more environmentally friendly farm products. Because of the limited representation of livestock operations in the Central Saanich agriculture sector, there is no abundant local source of farm-source organic nutrients to support local organic farming systems. Currently, household organics from the CRD, are of interest as a potential source of agricultural nutrients.

#### ***Recommendations***

Actions to develop organic nutrient supplies for Central Saanich include:

- Continue to participate in the CRD household organics project to identify opportunity for Central Saanich agriculture to gain access to this source of organic compost
- Coordinate with an organic fertilizer company to identify and investigate precision in-the-row fertilization techniques requiring less fertilizer to optimize production
- Lobby for investigation of the health, disease and safety risks associated with using manure composts from conventional production for organic and “natural” crop production systems
- Investigate the feasibility of using of local fish based fertilizers in agricultural applications
- Investigate the feasibility of incorporating more green crop plow-under and legumes in the crop rotation to replenish nutrients, including implications for irrigation requirements
- Develop an inventory of livestock manures, in the District, such as horse manures, to determine if opportunities exist to better utilize this resource on farms in the area
- Create and support initiatives to attract livestock production and processing to the Saanich Peninsula.

### **5.4.6 Action Area #17: Golden Nematode Quarantine**

The Golden Nematode quarantine has severely limited Central Saanich farmers in their cropping and rotation options, and required extra precautions to avoid the spread of the pest in the handling of produce, movement of equipment. Central Saanich has little potential to supply some of the most extensively consumed produce items without modification of the ban. The risk management protocols associated with handling nursery and root crops need to be re-examined to determine if more proactive approaches are feasible.

#### ***Recommendations***

Actions which would determine if the quarantine order can be modified or lifted include:

- Lobby CFIA to promptly complete a survey to determine if the Golden Nematode pest can be detected
- Investigate the feasibility of installing phyto-sanitary processing capacity with the capability to eliminate the risk of spreading the nematode pest using vegetable food safety protocols.

## **5.5 Objective #5: Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture**

Virtually all jurisdictions in developed countries stress the importance of improving the public’s awareness of agriculture, its role in modern society, and the issues it faces.

### **5.5.1 Action Area #18: Supporting Local Agriculture**

In the competition for land and resources, agriculture cannot survive without public support and consideration. Central Saanich agriculture lacks a clear identity among the majority of its population and specifically, urban residents. The incremental and growing threats to farming viability are obscured by



the conspicuous historical investment in farm structures, equipment and land. Studies suggest that the general public has not yet figured out the connection that, as local farmers are challenged to compete with higher input costs, buying “cheap” imported food does not translate into demand for local products.

### **Recommendations**

The recent initiatives to support agriculture have been enthusiastically received by the public and the agricultural sector. Actions to promote agricultural awareness, support local agricultural business, and increase public participation to support/celebrate the local food system include:

- Continue farmers’ markets and Agricultural Fair events featuring local agricultural products
- Continue to work with local industry and neighbouring municipalities (e.g., North Saanich) to promote the Chef’s Collaborative, ‘taste of Central Saanich’ food promotions, and other Peninsula initiatives to promote locally grown food
- Work with the farming community to enhance agriculture education at schools, including Agriculture in the Classroom
- Consider maintaining an agriculture-food webpage on District website, with ‘operation/farmer of the month’ features, seasonal local food recipes, etc.; ‘fact sheets’, presentations to Council
- Develop a multi-partner communications plan to raise awareness of local agriculture
- Support community gardens/urban agriculture demonstrations to promote agricultural awareness
- Promote and assist field and neighbourhood signage to identify agricultural areas, sub-areas and what is grown in those areas
- Develop road signage to engage the public in respecting farm traffic, tractor signage, crop identification in fields
- Inventory public lands in Central Saanich to identify suitable lands for community agricultural uses
- Develop annual municipal ‘State of Agriculture’ reports based on AAP indicators
- Provide an annual scholarship in agriculture to a Grade 12 student interested in pursuing agricultural studies
- Seek support for the development of a community demonstration farm.

### **5.5.2 Action Area #19: Promoting Agriculture in the Region**

Peri-urban<sup>11</sup> conditions in other jurisdictions have shown that the expanding urban fringe creates both pressures on, and opportunities for, rural economies. The preferred policy response is to better integrate farmers and farmland in an approach focused on socio-economic vitality through providing innovative and diversified products and services that respond to the needs of urbanites. Central Saanich’s agriculture sector is attuned to demands from the consumer public about what they feel is important policy for farmland and farmers. Public interest is strongly focused on preserving the capacity for continued local food production along with appreciation of other amenities that farmland provides. However, an agricultural strategy and policy instruments for farmlands has not yet developed that balances these various demands in ways that reflect agricultural concerns about long-term viability and makes best use of farmland assets.

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<sup>11</sup> “Peri-urban” refers to location in the perimeter of urban areas and under the influence of urban populations.

### **Recommendations**

Actions for better integrating agriculture into peri-urban regional functions include:

- Prepare brochure highlighting agricultural opportunities for value-added in Central Saanich and distribute to the business community and tourism sector. Attach to municipal mail-outs and make available to the tourism sector; put on District and CRD website (or links to)
- Work with tourism industry to develop 'taste of Central Saanich' tours, guidebooks, cookbooks and promotions at local and regional restaurants, convention/hotel facilities and other venues
- Investigate the potential to create short food chains that magnify the positive attributes of local food
- Undertake an audit of peri-urban resources and study activity patterns of the urban population to determine where local agriculture can be most effectively promoted.



## **6.0 Implementation Strategy**

The sustainability and future viability of agriculture in the District of Central Saanich is a shared responsibility. The District, through its Official Community Plan and various bylaws plays a strong role in some key areas related to the objectives and vision of the agricultural area plan. For example, the District can help protect the resource base upon which agriculture depends. It can also assist with facilitating a “sustainable agriculture” culture that benefits the entire community by protecting the resource base, furthering economic viability, creating employment, and enhancing the rural character and environmental attributes of the municipality. While the District can play an integral part in the sustainability of agriculture, the community also faces external factors which it does not have full control over. These include regional growth pressures, agricultural commodity markets, and senior level government policies.

Despite these challenges, agriculture continues to be an economic driver in the District. It is evident through its policies and bylaws that the District values agriculture and the role it plays in the community. Given its size and resources available to it, the District has a limited ability to initiate new programs or projects. However, in some areas it can act as a catalyst to initiate discussions, explore opportunities, lobby senior governments and work with other partners and interests in implementing the Agricultural Area Plan.

### **6.1 Strategic Considerations**

The Saanich Peninsula and Central Saanich, in particular, are challenged by under-functioning organizations, mechanisms and financial models in support of agriculture. Where once agriculture was the economic backbone of the community, today the contribution of agriculture to the regional economy is barely recognized or appreciated as a component in economic development strategy. This situation is not unusual in situations where the agriculture sector has been subjected to non-farming intrusions, fragmentation by non-agricultural land uses, and intense competition for the farmland base. However, unless efforts are taken to promote agriculture and invigorate farming as part of the fabric of the community, the sector will be anticipated to continue to wither away and eventually disappear. Most importantly, it may already be beyond the capacity of the agricultural community to reverse fortunes without the targeted assistance of governments and the general public.

#### **6.1.1 Organizational Needs**

At the local level, farmers need a mechanism to interact with local council on a regular basis. This body should consist primarily of farmer membership to ensure that farm perspectives are represented. Such a body could be an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). While recognizing that the PAC exists and has served a useful role in Peninsula agriculture the past, the focus is more regional by virtue of its membership. A local AAC is better placed to advocate for agriculture within the municipality.

At the regional level, agriculture needs an expanded presence within the CRD through a) an Agricultural Advisory Committee and b) within the region’s economic development mandate. This relationship will work most effectively if agriculture can be championed at the regional level.

The CRD is a logical proponent of an Agricultural Development Office (ADO), since regional districts were initially created specifically for the purpose of delivering regional services such as economic development. The ADO’s mandate could include facilitating initiatives, information flow, coordination,

and program access by the agricultural sector and keys to the effectiveness would be critical mass and stable funding. At the same time, collaboration with ongoing initiatives in support of economic development should be pursued (e.g., Business Victoria<sup>12</sup> and/or the Greater Victoria Development Agency<sup>13</sup>).

At the provincial level, agricultural concerns need to be relayed to responsible government ministries in order to lobby for changes in support of agriculture. Central Saanich could take a more vocal position within UCBM as some other municipalities are doing. Regional Districts, who are also members of the UCBM, can lobby the province on behalf of constituents. Areas requiring immediate attention include criteria for farming status, non-farm encroachment, and agri-industrial development in the ALR.

### **6.1.2 Mechanism Considerations**

While there are tools available to local governments to support agriculture and to regulate land use activities on the ALR to a limited extent, municipalities have inadequate guidance or limited regulatory support from the province to strategically manage in support of agriculture. Significant gaps are evident in the tools available to municipalities to manage non-farming activities in the ALR, to provide incentives to encourage agricultural use, and to discourage land use incompatible with supporting agriculture and farming practices. Conditions creating pressures on farming are increasingly a function of non-agricultural demands on farmland for residential, ecological, and recreational purposes.

The BC Agricultural Plan (2008) notwithstanding, BC lacks an active provincial agricultural strategy. Local governments are buffeted by area-specific demands generated by growth, often focused on farmland for accommodation. Municipal governments are confronted by strong vested interests in trying to independently initiate land use measures that would support agriculture locally, e.g., farm home plates, house size limitations and it is a proactive strategy for agriculture at the provincial level with appropriate guidelines and enabling tools that is seriously lacking.

Given the above, several of the recommendations in the Plan are geared towards the District advocating or lobbying for more effective provincial tools that will assist local governments in regulating non-farm uses and support local agriculture.

### **6.1.3 Budgetary Considerations**

Central Saanich agriculture does not have a strong ability to sponsor and support agricultural initiatives. At the local level, the sector is extremely heterogeneous with only a handful of full-time commercial farmers. Programs utilized by the mainstream agricultural sector in BC are largely un-accessed on the Saanich Peninsula because farms do not have the capital to support research and development budgets.

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<sup>12</sup> Also known as the Greater Victoria Economic Development Commission. However, it is noted that funding for Business Victoria has been cut in recent years and the CRD has been historically reluctant to pursue an expanded economic development role, instead focussing on provision of services in support of economic sustainability, such as basic infrastructure, public services and amenities, information and analysis, maintaining a business and investment climate, and facilitating coordination, consultation, and government support.

<sup>13</sup> The Greater Victoria Development Agency (GVDA), an industry led consortium representing all sectors in the region and formed in 2007, should be worked with to attract agricultural opportunities to the Saanich Peninsula. While agriculture is currently mentioned in the GVDA's Business Development Guide as a top business sector, the existing and potential significance of local agriculture is mostly unexplained.

At the regional level, the CRD does not invest in local agriculture and the local regional Peninsula Agricultural Commission (PAC) has operated on a shoestring budget for a number of years. The possibility for a regional levy in support of agriculture is tantalizing but the prospect is not anticipated in the immediate future, unless food security comes to be considered part of the basic infrastructure of the region.

At the provincial level, funding on agriculture has faced systemic cutbacks over several decades. Nonetheless, federal-provincial programs are available although the seed capital has not been available from the farming sector to leverage the program funding.

Despite the real and perceived constraints to finding seed capital, it is no less evident that the sector will have to generate and spend capital in order to generate new opportunities. In this vein, it is critical that concerted efforts need to be made to engage local and regional governments in initiatives that might identify and realize agricultural sector opportunities in Central Saanich.

There are several potential opportunities available to lever funding in support of local agricultural initiatives. The needs identified in the Agricultural Area planning process include lack of knowledge of the programs, financial constraints in gaining access to programs, and inadequate focus on the business of farming. A short list of selected programs available to agriculture is presented in Appendix B.

#### **6.1.4 Jurisdictional Considerations**

The organizational, mechanism and financial challenges of planning for Central Saanich agriculture are further exacerbated by the complexity of the jurisdictional responsibilities and authority in the sector. Proposed recommendations fall into a range of several action categories that may require a different implementation tactics and with differing abilities of Central Saanich to influence outcomes. In this context, it is often challenging to correlate the importance of the recommended action with the effort required, the likelihood of success, and the priority it should be assigned in the Plan. For example, there are numerous recommendations requiring that Central Saanich lobby more senior levels of government to create the landscape required to support agriculture. However, notwithstanding the necessity for coordinated action at all levels, there is really no way to predict the success of lobbying and it could jeopardize the Plan to focus too intensely on actions dependent on decisions by other jurisdictions. This is a conundrum being faced by many jurisdictions as agricultural sectors adjust to intense local, regional, national and international pressures.

As a consequence of jurisdictional framework, Central Saanich may be required to pursue recommendations through various action categories:

- Doable within the purview the municipality, such as municipal regulatory, policy and standards changes and initiate further investigation
- Advocate, as a member of a larger organization, for initiatives to support agriculture (e.g., PAC, CRD, UBCM)
- Lobby for, such as actions at the provincial level (e.g., ALC, BCAA, BCMA, MOE) and federal level (CFIA, DOE, DFO) to improve the regulatory and policy framework in support of agriculture
- Facilitate, as a supporter of actions enlisting the voluntary participation of various groups and jurisdictions (e.g., communication, awareness, education)
- Promote, by coordinating interest and resources to deliver workshops, information sessions, training
- Support, by effective oversight, to ensure that the climate to support agriculture is maintained.

Each of these action categories is important and a mix of approaches is required, spread over a range of priorities and timeframes. Several initiatives are currently ongoing in priority areas and should be continued. A detailed presentation is attached in Appendix A.

### **6.1.5 Getting Started**

Because of the substantial need for joint action, there is significant possibility that the rolling out of the Agricultural Area Plan will be delayed or altered because of the time required for collaboration, consensus building and mobilization of initiatives. This could create circumstances where high emphasis on regional and regional objectives could return few identifiable short term benefits to Central Saanich agriculture and would create the perception that nothing is getting done.

For these reasons, it is important that the Plan also have implementation elements with local objectives and doable elements that are not dependent on collective action that can proceed while initiatives in regional and provincial jurisdictions are pursued. Those action areas in which it is anticipated that early results (within 5 years) can be demonstrated include:

- Formation of a standing Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) to improve communication with the District on local agricultural matters
- Working with the AAC to develop more streamlined regulatory processes and a definition of “bona fide” agriculture that promotes the type of farmland use that can be supported by the District
- Working with the AAC and ALC to identify illegal land use activities in ALR (e.g. soil filling) and take collective action to rectify
- Increased communication with the CRD on various issues:
  - Diversion of organic household waste recycling for the benefit of local agriculture
  - Regional enforcement of soil and water conservation
  - Creational of a regional office for agricultural extension and business development
  - Creational of a regional land trust and farmland acquisition fund
  - Development of a coordinated regional approach to crop protection and management of overabundant wildlife populations
  - Creation of farm-wildlife stewardship program with regional levy and ecological goods and services payments in support of farming
  - Lower water rates in support of agriculture
  - Development of regional food procurement policies in support of local agriculture
  - Establishment of a standing regional Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise the CRD on agriculture-related issues.
- Collaboration with neighbouring municipalities, the CRD and BCMA to develop agricultural extension capacity in the Saanich Peninsula
- Creating databases of farmland available for lease and agriculture-related facilities (e.g., storage, processing) that may be accessed by enterprising farmers
- Based on the issues identified in this Agricultural Area Plan, develop an advocacy and lobby plan to engage provincial agencies in incentivizing existing programs, policies and regulations to address challenges faced by local agriculture.

Appendix A includes a detailed listing of recommendations including who should take the lead (and support roles), the relative priority and budget considerations.

## **7.0 Indicators for Monitoring the Performance of the Agricultural Area Plan**

The following indicators are proposed as a means to measure the progress of the implementation of the Plan over the next five years.

### **7.1 *Bona Fide Farm Use***

- Working farms are productively using farmland
- Agri-tourism is compatible with working farms
- Farmers providing ecological goods and services are receiving favourable tax status through BC Assessment Authority.

### **7.2 *Productive Use of Farmland in ALR***

- Regulations in place for size and siting of non-farm structures within the ALR
- Acreage of farm land productively farmed is growing
- A network of farmland available for lease is operational.

### **7.3 *Viable Agricultural Enterprises***

- An Agricultural Advisory Committee has been established supported by an agrologist staff person
- An Agricultural Development Office has been created on a trial basis at the regional level
- Value added agricultural activities are increasing
- Local or regional processing facilities are available for local farmers
- Local or regional packing and handling facilities are available for local farmers
- A public regional farmland trust is active in securing farmland and creating opportunities for farming
- Institutions are procuring local food
- Farmer markets are active throughout the region
- Local and regional food distribution systems are working and a local brand has been developed
- An appropriate agri-industrial area within the District has been investigated.

### **7.4 *Enhanced Agricultural Resource Base***

- A plan is in place for enhancing agricultural drainage and water supply
- The Integrated Stormwater Management Plan is being implemented for the benefit of agriculture
- Transportation planning is compatible with agricultural use
- Conflicts between agriculture and wildlife are being managed for the benefit of agriculture
- Sources of alternative organic nutrients have been investigated
- Issues with the golden nematode quarantine are being resolved.

## 7.5 **Public Support for Agriculture**

- Resident support for the rural character and environmental benefits promoted by the agricultural area plan
- District commitment to investment in infrastructure improvements with benefits for agricultural land
- Investigation completed into developing components of the local food system
- Public land made available for community agricultural initiatives
- Various local marketing systems – all successful
- More local food purchased locally
- School curriculum includes local agriculture.





## Acronyms Used in the Agricultural Area Plan and Appendices

- AAC – Agricultural Advisory Committee (proposed)
- AAFC – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- ADO – Agricultural Development Office
- ALC – Agricultural Land Commission
- ARDCORP – Agricultural Research and Development Corporation
- ARDSA - Agriculture and Rural Development Subsidiary Agreement, a federal-provincial program under which agricultural drainage and flood control criteria were developed
- BCAA – BC Assessment Authority
- BCAC – BC Agriculture Council
- BCATA – BC Agri-Tourism Association
- BCFPA – BC Food Processors Association
- BCMA – BC Ministry of Agriculture
- BMP – Beneficial Management Practice
- CFBMC – Canadian Farm Business Management Council
- CRD – Capital Regional District
- CR-FAIR – Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable
- CS – Central Saanich
- CSAEC – Central Saanich Agriculture Economic Commission (proposed)
- DFWT - Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust
- DFO – Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- EC - Environment Canada
- EFP – Environmental Farm Plan
- FCC – Farm Credit Canada
- GFRs – Gross Farm Receipts
- GVEDC – Greater Victoria Economic Development Commission
- GVDA – Greater Victoria Development Agency
- IAFBC – Investment Agriculture Foundation, BC
- ISMP – Integrated Stormwater Management Plan
- IVCA – Island Vegetable Co-op Association
- IFA – Island Farmers Alliance
- MOE – BC Ministry of Environment
- MOT – BC Ministry of Transportation
- N&SSAS – North & South Saanich Agricultural Society
- PAC – Peninsula Agricultural Commission
- SPCOC - Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
- SSFPA – Small Scale Food Processor Association
- SD – School District
- SVIFDMA – South Vancouver Island Farm Direct Marketing Association
- TVI – Tourism Vancouver Island
- TLC – The Land Conservancy
- UVIC – University of Victoria
- VAA – Victoria Airport Authority
- VREB – Victoria Real Estate Board

**Appendix A: Detailed Agricultural Action Plan**

1. Support Designated Farm Uses						
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required	
5.1.1 Defining Bona Fide Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a municipal definition of bona fide farming to use as a guideline in regulating farmland use, in consultation with farmers (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> <li>Lobby BCAA and ALC to develop a coordinated approach to bona fide farming that supports farming in relation to what is produced on the farm and to a level of time commitment and proportion of annual gross income (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> <li>Lobby the ALC to clarify agri-tourism activities and extent so that Central Saanich can create a more efficient administrative process for reviewing and permitting proposed agri-tourism related ventures within the municipality (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> <li>Lobby BCAA for changes in farm tax assessment to define acceptable products/processes and include value-added and agri-tourism products in determining primary production gross income (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> <li>Lobby ALC, BCAA and BCMA for an integrated review of regulation and policies affecting small scale farmers (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> <li>In consultation with farmers (could be AAC driven), develop a policy on ancillary use of farm structures for non-farm purposes (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> <li>Lobby the BCAA to develop a special tax classification for farmland favourable to farmers that hold land in a natural state providing environmental goods and services (Sect. 5.1.1, p.12)</li> </ul>	High  High  High  High  Medium  Medium  Medium	Immediate  Immediate  Immediate  Medium  Immediate  Short  Medium	CS; PAC; AAC  BCAA, BCMA; ALC; CS; PAC  ALC; CS  BCAA; BCMA; ALC; CS  ALC; BCMA; CS  CS; AAC, PAC  BCAA; CS	Farmer, AAC and staff time (approx. 1 staff/2 weeks)  Minimal – meet with BCAA and ALC to develop definition  Minimal – meet with ALC  Minimal – meet with BCAA, ALC, BCMA  Minimal – meet with ALC and BCMA  Minimal; Farmer and staff time (1 staff/2 weeks)  Minimal – meet with BCAA	

2. Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.2.1 Reduce Non-Farm Use of Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider ways to restrict house size to minimize the loss of productive farmland to residential uses (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Lobby province/ALC to consider restrictions on new rural residential construction in the ALR in favour of bona fide farmers with record of appropriate farm income for a suitable period of time (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Lobby the province to investigate the feasibility of requiring longer term farm rental agreements to be registered on title in order for landlord to acquire tax status for the farmland (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Lobby the province to restrict land under a rural-residential dwelling from being eligible for farm tax classification unless the resident is employed in agriculture on the farm to which the residence is attached (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Apply to the ALC to have all lands in the District receiving farm assessment status to be included in the ALR (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Consider establishing an agricultural impact assessment requirement for new rural-residential construction (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Recommend stewardship responsibilities for property owners in agriculture areas on how their lands should be maintained, e.g., by using existing provisions of the Weed Control Act; developing a Code of Farmland Stewardship for non-farm use in the ALR (Sect. 5.2.1, p.13)</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of encouraging landlords, possibly through tax benefits or other incentives, to enter into longer term arrangements that would provide security to would-be farmers and facilitate more intensive agricultural operations (Sect. 5.2.2, p.14)</li> <li>Create a website or organization-based farmland clearinghouse or land registry for linking a database of potential tenants to a database of potential landlords (Sect. 5.2.2, p.14)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CS	Contract - \$8,000 - \$10,000– conduct review of other jurisdictions
		High	Medium	ALC; CS	Minimal – meet with ALC
		High	Medium	BCAA; CS	Minimal – meet with BCAA
		High	Medium	BCAA; CS	Minimal – meet with BCAA
		High	Medium	CS, AAC	Arrange meeting with ALC
		Medium	Short	CS; AAC	Staff time to develop policy (1 staff/2 weeks)
		Medium	Medium	CS; BCMA; PAC; AAC	Staff time to develop Code (1 staff/1 week)
		High	Immediate	CS; CRD	Contract - \$5,000 - \$10,000
		High	Immediate	CS; CRD; CR-FAIR	Contract to set up database/website and promote (\$10,000 approx)
		5.2.2 Lower Barriers and Reduce Constraints to Farmer Access to Farmland			

2. Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.2.3 Reduce Wasteful Use of Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate initiatives to encourage established farmers to take on apprentices so that skills may be transmitted to the next generation (Sect. 5.2.2, p.14)</li> </ul>	High	Short	PAC; CSAEC	Access CFPMC and other government programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby for CRD purchase of farmlands into a Farmland Trust for rental farmers, community allotment gardening, agricultural demonstration and education (Sect. 5.2.2, p.14)</li> </ul>	High	Medium	CRD; CS; PAC	Minimal – Meetings with CRD, PAC, AAC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby BCMA, with PAC assistance, to undertake a small scale agriculture needs analysis (Sect. 5.2.2, p.14)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	BCMA; CS; PAC	Minimal – meetings with BCMA, PAC, AAC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Land Trusts to preserve farmland in the municipality for the purpose of increasing agricultural activity and making it available under lease agreement to farmers (Sect. 5.2.2, p.14)</li> </ul>	Medium	Long	CS; Land Trusts (e.g., TLC, others)	Minimal – meeting with AAC and Land Trusts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop home plate specifications or otherwise limit the size of the building footprint and siting of structures and access in the ALR<sup>14</sup> (Sect. 5.2.3, p.14)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; AAC	Staff time to research and develop bylaw (1 staff/2 weeks)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require site plan approvals for non-farm residential development to protect existing and potential agricultural activities (Sect. 5.2.3, p.14)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; AAC	Could be done with above action (1 staff/1 week)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt provincial standards for maximum lot coverage (Sect. 5.2.3, p.14)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; AAC	1 staff/2-3 weeks; consultation with AAC

<sup>14</sup> At the time of this Plan, the BCMA is investigating the feasibility of applying a home plate concept to the ALR.

<b>3. Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise</b>						
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>	<b>When? (1)</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	
5.3.1 Counteract the Impact of High Farmland Values and Farming Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate with the CRD for lower agricultural water rates (Sect. 5.3.1, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CRD; CS; PAC; AAC	Impact needs to be determined.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby province to develop farm tax classification for structures used in primary and value added agricultural production in bona fide agricultural enterprises (Sect. 5.3.1, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Medium	BCAA; CS; PAC	Meet with BCAA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a public regional farmland trust to purchase of land or covenants by municipal and/or regional governments (Regional Acquisition Fund) for lease or resale to farmers, using a designated property tax to generate funds (Sect. 5.3.1, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Medium	CRD, CS	Substantial	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby the province to create financial deterrents, profit recapture taxes, or penalties applied to farmland sales for non-agricultural land use (Sect. 5.3.1, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Long	BCAA; BCMA; CS	Meet with BCAA and BCMA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby the province to consider setting up an agricultural land bank to purchase farmland from retiring farmers and sell or lease to new entrants, focusing on transitioning larger parcels for intergenerational transfer (Sect. 5.3.1, p.15)</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	BCMA; CS	Initiate discussions with BCMA	
5.3.2 Improve Access to the Local Food System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate with the CRD to establish a year-round covered farmers market(s) in Victoria or other central marketing location (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CRD; CS; SVIDFMA; Other Peninsula municipalities	Initiate discussions with PAC and CRD	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver irrigation capability to all farmland at affordable cost (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS	Investigate needs and incorporate into capital works budget	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support initiatives to attract local and/or regional value-added activity by various means, including tax exemptions, designating and providing agri-industrial parks and services (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Medium	ADO; CRD; CS; IVCA; SPCOC	Contract (\$25,000 approx)	

3. Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.3.3 Increase Value-Added Agricultural Activity in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate to assess the business feasibility of a local or regional (possible co-op) food handling facility and options for developing centralized infrastructure to support local marketing channels, such as handling and staging facilities, cold storage, heated warehouse space (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> <li>Encourage institutions by creating incentives to buy local produce (e.g., procurement policies by institutions - 50% minimum local) (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> <li>Create incentives for local retailers to sell local agricultural products (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> <li>Investigate the marketing benefit of a Saanich Peninsula brand<sup>15</sup>, possibly in collaboration with North Saanich and IFA (Sect. 5.3.2, p.15)</li> </ul>	High	Long	ADO; CS; PAC; IVCA	Access IAFBC grant funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a database of local on-farm and commercial processing facilities on the peninsula (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CRD; SDs, VIHA, CR-FAIR, CSAF; CS	Initiate meetings among various participants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue establishment of an Agriculture Development Office, ideally CRD based, with a mandate to improve communication, promote agricultural business development, spearhead agricultural initiatives, and identify and access funding opportunities on the Saanich Peninsula (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS; ADO; IVCA; SPCOC	Contract; IAFBC grant funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of pursuing community kitchen/other shared processing initiative to encourage local value –added opportunities (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	ADO; PAC; North Saanich; IVCA; IFA	Contract; IAFBC grant funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue funding and partners to pilot test community based value-added initiatives, including meat processing (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	PAC; ADO	Contract (\$5,000 - \$10,000)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of pursuing community kitchen/other shared processing initiative to encourage local value –added opportunities (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CRD; CS; GVEDC; GVDA	Minimal Access IAFBC grant funding for feasibility assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue funding and partners to pilot test community based value-added initiatives, including meat processing (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CS; PAC; ADO; SPCOC; GVDA	Contract (\$5,000-10,000); Access IAFBC grant funding
		High	Short	ADO; GVDA; GVEDC	Access IAFBC grant funding Attract private capital

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that North Saanich's Agricultural Plan recommends a branding strategy to reinforce the municipality's agricultural identity. The agricultural stakeholder workshop recommended more use of the "Rooster" brand on local goods

<b>3. Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise</b>					
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>	<b>When? (1)</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage collaboration of farmers, CRD, SSFPA, VIHFC, IAFBC, institutions, and senior governments to identify value-added agricultural opportunities supporting local economic development (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> <li>Promote agricultural processing in any future CS economic development strategy (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> <li>Engage ALC in discussions re: ALC regulations on on-farm processing (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> <li>Lobby senior governments for more farm-friendly processing regulations (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of developing appropriate agri-industrial capacity in Central Saanich, possibly with incentives to attract investment<sup>16</sup> (Sect. 5.3.3, p.16)</li> <li>Lobby the province to re-instate a local agricultural extension function for the Saanich Peninsula (Sect. 5.3.4, p.17)</li> <li>Lobby FCC to sponsor new affordable financial supports for innovators in new farm types. This could include assisting low asset new entrants with operating loans where high land values preclude land ownership (Sect. 5.3.4, p.17)</li> <li>Lobby the province and industry to develop outreach and educational programs in developing marketing skills, food safety practices, regulations, and requirements that would have a positive impact in promoting alternative enterprises (Sect. 5.3.4, p.17)</li> <li>Continue to encourage farm operations to complete and implement EFPs, including the use of BMPs to improve agricultural operations and provide environmental benefits (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> </ul>	High	Medium	CRD ; IFA; Other Organizations; ADO; SPCOC CS; IVCA; ADO; SPCOC ALC; BCMA; CS; ADO; PAC AAFC; CFIA; BCMA; CS; ADO; SSFPA CS; ADO; SPCOC BCMA; CS, BCAC FCC: BCAC; CS BCMA; BCFPA; SSFPA; ADO	Access IAFBC grant funding Access IAFBC grant funding Meet with ALC Meet with BCMA Contract (\$15,000-20,000) Access IAFBC grant funding Meet with BCMA Initiate meeting with FCC Initiate meeting with interests
5.3.4 Encourage On-Farm Innovation		High	Short	BCMA; CS, BCAC	Meet with BCMA
		High	Short	FCC: BCAC; CS	Initiate meeting with FCC
		Medium	Medium	BCMA; BCFPA; SSFPA; ADO	Initiate meeting with interests
5.3.5 Address Regulatory Constraints to Farming		High	Ongoing	ARDCORP; PAC; AAC; CS	Start dialogue with operators through PAC, AAC

<sup>16</sup> Section 3.2.2 (policy 10) of the OCP anticipates an opportunity develop an agricultural-industrial zoning designation to protect and encourage agriculture related industries in the Keating Industrial area and at other appropriate locations throughout the District.

<b>3. Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise</b>					
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>	<b>When? (1)</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>
5.3.6 Manage the Rural-Urban Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage farmers in review of regulations and development affecting agriculture (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> <li>Improve accessibility to Municipal Hall by establishing a 'Farm Liaison' in the planning department with agrologist credentials (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> <li>Provide pre-application assistance to farmers requiring approvals for farm related structures and other works that fall under municipal authority (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> <li>Establish a Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) to advise the municipality on issues affecting local agriculture (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> <li>Explore the feasibility of designating land in the A-1 zone as a Temporary Use Permit area for commercial composting and, in consultation with farmers, set criteria to ensure benefits accrue to farming (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> <li>Initiate a review of regulations affecting farmland to streamline regulations governing processing, composting, and distribution in the ALR and on farmlands (Sect. 5.3.5, p.17)</li> <li>Encourage farmers to notify neighbours of upcoming activities/farming operations that may create unexpected situations (Sect. 5.3.6, p.18)</li> <li>Establish rural block watches along the rural-urban fringes to help educate and monitor good neighbour behaviour among both farmers and non-farmers (Sect. 5.3.6, p.18)</li> <li>Request that realtors disclose to potential buyers of properties adjacent to the ALR that farming operations occur on the adjacent properties (Sect. 5.3.6, p.18)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CS; AAC, PAC	1 staff/2 weeks
		High	Immediate	CS, Other Peninsula municipalities (e.g., sharing a position)	Possibly an extra staff person (potential to be shared with other local governments or CRD)
		High	Immediate	CS	Staff time (2 days/month?)
		High	Immediate	CS	Minimal (will require staff time to support AAC – 2 -3 days/month)
		High	Short	CS, ALC	Staff time (1 staff/1 week)
		Medium	Short	ALC; BCMA; BCAC CS;	Staff time or contract (1 staff/1 week)
		High	Immediate	AAC; PAC	Send out notice to farmers
		Medium	Ongoing	AAC, farmers	Hold meeting with rural landowners to discuss interest in block watches and/or neighbourhood meetings
		Medium	Short	ALC, CS	Discuss with ALC and Real Estate Board



<b>3. Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise</b>						
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>	<b>When? (1)</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	
5.3.7 Facilitate Sustainable Rural Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage rural-residential developers in the ALR to construct and maintain buffers on their properties so as not to infringe on adjacent agricultural operations (Sect. 5.3.6, p.18)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS; AAC	Minimal, communicate at permit application stage	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a plan to fund and establish a network of community supported agro-forestry and orchard land to form an agriculturally productive greenbelt system to enhance urban containment and buffer farm operations from urban complaints (Sect. 5.3.6, p.18)</li> </ul>	Medium	Long	CS; CRD; Land Trusts	IAFBC grants; regional park and farm land acquisition funds; carbon offsets from development	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review municipal regulations with regard to agri-tourism (Sect. 5.3.7, p.18)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; PAC; BCATA; SVIDFMA; AAC	Hold a workshop with ALC, AAC and farmers	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby the province to develop a definition of appropriate agri-tourism activities on farmland that should be supported under the Farm Practices Protection Act (Sect. 5.3.7, p.18)</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium	ALC; BCMA; AAC	Initiate a meeting with ALC and BCMA to discuss agri-tourism activities and regulatory requirements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an agri-tourism handbook that assists operators to identify and address regulations and prepare guidelines to ensure that agri-tourism complements the agricultural community and has linkages to local agricultural organizations (Sect. 5.3.7, p.18)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS; BCATA; TVI	1 staff/2 weeks or contract (\$5-10K); Grants available	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a process for assessing the incremental and cumulative impacts of proposed agri-tourism development (Sect. 5.3.7, p.18)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS; AAC	1 staff/1 week	

4. Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.4.1 Availability of Agricultural Water Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the water balance project with BCMA (Sect. 5.4.1, p.19)</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	CS; BCMA	Follow up to ISMP; meetings with BCMA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for implementation of best management plans for irrigation and water conservation on farms (Sect. 5.4.1, p.19)</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	ARDCORP; CS; PAC; AAC	Continuation of the EFP BMPs for irrigation efficiency improvements; Possible workshop with farmers to promote BMPs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore feasibility of expanding farmland access to water supply and increasing irrigation capacity (Sect. 5.4.1, p.19)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS	1 staff/1 week or contract (\$5,000)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support efforts to reserve agricultural water for farmland in the ALR including, where appropriate, on-farm storage (Sect. 5.4.1, p.19)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS	Tie in with above
5.4.2 Agricultural Drainage and Flood Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that implementation of Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP) recommendations benefits agriculture and ISMP matters are referred to the AAC (Sect. 5.4.2, p.19)</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	CS	Minimal - staff time to follow up to ISMP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an agricultural drainage plan that addresses drainage issues on farmland areas of Central Saanich, while continuing to provide associated wildlife habitat values (Sect. 5.4.2, p.19)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; PAC; AAC	Follow-up to ISMP 1 staff/2 weeks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of implementing ARDSA drainage and flood control criteria for farmland, which accommodates flood events with timely drawdown (Sect. 5.4.2, p.19)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS	Tie in with drainage plan above
5.4.3 Rural Transportation and Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a rural transportation servicing plan for agriculture and require transportation proposals undergo an agricultural impact assessment to identify impacts and mitigation measures (Sect. 5.4.3, p.20)</li> </ul>	High	Medium	CS; ALC; AAC; MOT	1 staff/2 weeks and/or contract (\$10,000)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate agricultural considerations (including on-farm marketing) in planning and designing transportation corridors in the ALR to facilitate farmland access and minimize farming operations disruption (Sect. 5.4.3, p.20)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	MOT; CS	Tie into plan above
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop initiatives to facilitate sharing of roads in agricultural areas by non-farm traffic and tractors/farm equipment (Sect. 5.4.3, p.20)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS	Part of plan above

4. Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.4.4 Wildlife and Invasive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in regional initiatives (such as with Victoria Airport Authority) and environment agencies (e.g., Environment Canada, MOE) to seek management solutions to controlling over-abundant waterfowl populations (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Develop a public communications program to inform the community about how wildlife is affecting farming, discussing issues and possible solutions (possibly web-site based) (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Lobby the province to re-instate the exclusion fencing BMP in the Environmental Farm Plan program to control deer predation of agricultural crops (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Amend the Land Use Bylaw to exempt deer fencing on farmland within the ALR from height restrictions (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Lobby the province to have Central Saanich declared a provincial waterfowl damage compensation area and provide a compensation program for crop damage to farmers, through participation in federal –provincial waterfowl damage compensation programs (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Advocate with the CRD for regionally-based ecological goods and services levies to support conservation programs on farmland (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Lobby the MOE to develop carrying capacity parameters and population management strategies for over-abundant species in the District, including consideration of strategies used in other jurisdictions and to develop a peninsula-wide management strategy for over-abundant alien and invasive species (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of establishing a regional farmland-wildlife stewardship organization that delivers programs paying farmers for providing valued ecological goods and services (e.g. DFWT) (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	CS; PAC; VAA	Staff meetings – 1 day/mo. Could be handled by proposed agrologist position
		High	Immediate	PAC; CS; CRD	Staff to develop communication materials and follow up dialogue Maintain on District website
		High	Immediate	AAC, ARDCORP, BCAC, BCMA	Organize meeting with ARDCORP and BCMA. Access IAFBC funding
		High	Immediate	CS	1 staff/2 days
		High	Immediate	BCMA; CS; BCMA; BCAC; AAFC	Minimal to CS; substantial to the province
		High	Immediate	CRD; CS	Minimal to CS; substantial to the CRD
		High	Short	CS; MOE; EC; BCAC; BCMA	Request meeting with MOE/EC
		High	Short	CRD; CS; AAC; PAC	Contract (\$5-10K) with CRD contribution; IAFBC grant funding

4. Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.4.5 Organic Nutrients for Agricultural Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with environmental agencies to establish a management protocols for a resident waterfowl/wildlife category that allows culling to manage populations, in association with a local food access and security program (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Encourage research into integrated farm-level strategies to mitigate or eliminate the potential for damages during the growing season when susceptibility to loss or damage poses the greatest threat to farm viability (Sect. 5.4.4, p.20)</li> <li>Continue to participate in the CRD household organics project to identify opportunity for Central Saanich agriculture to gain access to this source of organic compost (Sect. 5.4.5, p.21)</li> <li>Coordinate with an organic fertilizer company to identify and investigate precision in-the-row fertilization techniques requiring less fertilizer to optimize production (Sect. 5.4.5, p.21)</li> <li>Lobby for investigation of the health, disease and safety risks associated with using manure composts from conventional production for organic and “natural” crop production systems (Sect. 5.4.5, p.21)</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of using of local fish based fertilizers in agricultural applications (Sect. 5.4.5, p.21)</li> </ul>	High	Short	EC; MOE; CS	Request meeting with MOE/EC; CR-FAIR; CRD
		High	Short	CRD; CS; ED; MOE	This could be one of the mandates of a regional farmland-wildlife stewardship organization
		High	Ongoing	CRD; CS; BCMA	Minimal; attend meetings and provide input
		High	Short	CS; ADO	Contract; IAFBC grant funding
		High	Short	CFIA; BCMA; AAFC	Minimal
		High	Short	BCMA; AAFC; ADO	Access IAFBC funding; encourage research by senior levels of government
		Medium	Short	AAFC; BCMA; ADO; Farmer Associations	Access AAFC; BCMA; IAFBC funding
		Medium	Short	BCMA; CS	Contract; IAFBC grant funding
		Medium	Medium	PAC; CRD; BCMA	Access IAFBC grant funding
	5.4.6 Golden Nematode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby CFIA to promptly complete a survey to determine if the Golden Nematode pest can be detected (Sect. 5.4.6, p.21)</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	CFIA; CS; BCMA; AAFC

4. Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
Quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the feasibility of installing phyto-sanitary processing capacity with the capability to eliminate the risk of spreading the nematode pest using vegetable food safety protocols (Sect. 5.4.6, p.21)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	ADO	Access IAFBC funding; depends on outcome of CFIA survey above

5. Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture						
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required	
5.4.1 Support Local Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue farmers' markets and Agricultural Fair events featuring local agricultural products (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> <li>Continue to work with local industry and neighbouring municipalities (e.g., North Saanich) to promote the Chef's Collaborative, 'taste of Central Saanich' food promotions, and other Peninsula initiatives to highlight locally grown food (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> <li>Work with the farming community to enhance agriculture education at schools, including Agriculture in the Classroom (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> <li>Consider maintaining an agriculture-food webpage on District website, with 'operation/farmer of the month' features, seasonal local food recipes, etc.; 'fact sheets', presentations to Council (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> <li>Develop a multi-partner communications plan to raise awareness of local agriculture (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing	CS; N&SSAS; SVIDFMA	Minimal; volunteer effort; assist with locations/facilities	
		High	Ongoing	CS; SVIDFMA	Minimal; volunteer effort	
		High	Ongoing	CS; AAC, SDs, BCAC	Minimal; initiate meeting with potential farmers who may be interested in going into schools to speak to students	
		High	Immediate	CS; SVIDFMA; PAC; ADO; BCMA	Seek sponsors; contract \$5,000 to initiate and volunteers to maintain	
		High	Immediate	CS; SVIDFMA; PAC; AAC; ADO; BCMA; SPCOC	Contract \$10,000; seek grant funding	

5. Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture					
Action Area	Recommended Actions	Priority for Action	When? (1)	Who?	Resources Required
5.5.2 Promote Local Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support community gardens/urban agriculture demonstrations to promote agricultural awareness (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CS; CRD; PAC; AAC; CR-FAIR; TLC	Access to public land; 1 staff/2 weeks assistance; some start up costs; seek volunteer help and grants; sponsors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and assist field and neighbourhood signage to identify agricultural areas, sub-areas and what is grown in those areas (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CS; PAC; AAC	1 staff/1-2 weeks with assistance from AAC; seek grant funding and sponsors for signs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop road signage to engage the public in respecting farm traffic, tractor signage, crop identification in fields (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Immediate	CS; PAC; AAC	Tie in with above signage program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inventory public lands in Central Saanich to identify suitable lands for community agricultural uses (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; AAC	Staff time with assistance from agrologist if required (1 staff/1 week)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop annual municipal 'State of Agriculture' reports based on AAP indicators (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; BCMA; ADO	1 staff/3 days/yr
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an annual scholarship in agriculture to a Grade 12 student interested in pursuing agricultural studies</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	CS; ADO	\$1,000 - \$5,000 annually; solicit private sponsor(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek support for the development of a community demonstration farm (Sect. 5.5.1, p.22)</li> </ul>	Low	Medium to Long	CRD; TLC; CS	Substantial; seek partners including community organizations and educational institutions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare brochure highlighting agricultural opportunities for value-added in Central Saanich and distribute to the business community and tourism sector. Attach to municipal mail-outs and make available to the tourism sector; put on District and CRD website (or links to) (Sect. 5.5.2, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Short	CS; SVIDFMA; PAC; ADO, TVI; SPCOC	Seek grant funding; contract (\$7,000 -10,000)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with tourism industry to develop 'taste of Central Saanich' tours, guidebooks, cookbooks and promotions at local and regional restaurants, convention/hotel facilities and other venues (Sect. 5.5.2, p.22)</li> </ul>	High	Long	CS; SVIDFMA; PAC; ADO, TVI; SPCOC	Seek sponsors and organizations to organize/assist

<b>5. Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture</b>					
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>	<b>When? (1)</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the potential to create short food chains that magnify the positive attributes of local food (Sect. 5.5.2, p.22)</li> <li>Undertake an audit of peri-urban resources and study activity patterns of the urban population to determine where local agriculture can be most effectively promoted (Sect. 5.5.2, p.22)</li> </ul>	Medium	Short	ADO; PAC, SVIDFMA	Access IAFBC grant funding
		Medium	Long	CS; ADO	Contract (\$10,000-20,000);-access IAFBC grant funding

(1) See List of Acronyms on Page 32

(2) Timeline for Action: Ongoing = continue; Immediate = within 1 year; Short = 1- 2 years; Medium = 2 – 5 years; Long = 5-10 years

### Appendix B: A Selected List of Programs Available to the Agricultural Sector in BC

Program	Delivery	Who is Eligible	What is funded	Details
Advance Payments	Producer Associations	Canadian farmers Producers of eligible agricultural products through producer organizations designated as program administrators	Give producers easier access to credit through cash advances The maximum cash advance available to each producer is \$400,000. The federal government pays the interest on the first \$100,000 of a cash advance issued to a producer per production period and producers have up until the end of the production period to repay their advance	Advance cannot exceed 50% of the value of the agricultural product
Small Projects Program	IAF	Eligible applicants consist of industry associations, co-operatives, marketing boards and commissions, corporations, partnerships, and sole proprietorships	Demonstration projects Applied research projects Speaker costs Education projects Marketing plan development.	Cost-shared Less than \$10,000 More than \$10,000
Canadian Agricultural Loans Act	Through a lending institution	Existing farmers Beginning /start-up farmers (i.e. less than 6 years of farming) Farmers taking over the family farm Agricultural co-operatives with a majority (50% + 1) farmer membership	Loans up to \$500,000	Federal government guarantees 95% of the loan to the lender
Cooperative Development Initiative	Rural and Cooperatives Secretariat	Not-for-profit organizations Universities and colleges, Co-operatives Individual researchers and co-operative developers who are working in collaboration with an established co-op sector or research entity	Advisory services – to provide access to professional and technical services needed for the successful launch or strengthening of a co-operative	
Innovative Co-operative Projects	Canadian Cooperative Association		Funding to innovative projects that respond to public policy priority areas and generate best practices and learning, such as 6 agriculture, including farmer-driven value-added agriculture and biofuels 7 rural/northern community development 8 innovative goods and services, including innovative technologies 9 capacity building and sustainability	
Research and	Rural and		To undertake and encourage policy research	



Program	Delivery	Who is Eligible	What is funded	Details
Knowledge Development Agriculture Environment & Wildlife Fund	Cooperatives Secretariat IAF		and applied research that will advance co-operative development and growth. Demonstration and adoption of stewardship practices Collaborative area planning Research Reduction of wildlife impact Education and awareness	
Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Fund	IAF	Industry organizations Associations Cooperatives Marketing boards Aboriginal groups For-profit companies Individual producers	Encourages farmers, processors, distributors, and retailers to work together to find innovative solutions to common concerns and to explore new market opportunities	
Buy BC Program	ARDCORP	Producer Fisher Retailer Food Service Industry Association/Society Packer Processor Wholesaler Distributor Government Agency	A user fee is required to sustain the <i>buyBC</i> program, providing in return the <i>buyBC</i> logo	
Island Agri-Food Initiative	IAF	All groups	Enhance market development and promotion of the agri-food industry Increase the stakeholder knowledge base in areas such as communications, economic potential, statistical data, marketing and product development Facilitate the development of strategic partnerships Support increased agri-food processing as a catalyst for rural community development	50:50 cost-share – up to 50% in-kind
Emerging Sectors Initiative	IAF	Small scale/lot agriculture Natural health products Aboriginal agriculture Agri-tourism and direct farm marketing	Eligible projects will address the gaps in applied scientific knowledge, technology adaptation and transfer, pre-commercialization exploration, skills,	

Program	Delivery	Who is Eligible	What is funded	Details
		Natural-care agri-based products Bio-products Bioenergy Apiculture Small-scale food processing Women Mushrooms	business development, collaboration and links with potential partners, in order to seize new business opportunities	
Enterprise Infrastructure Traceability Program	ARDCORP	Producers/farmers, Food processors Agri-food businesses	Specific costs relating to the purchase and installation of traceability infrastructure Training of staff to implement traceability systems for plants, animals and agri-food products	72:25 cost-share Maximum of \$20,000
Environmental Farm Plan Renewable Agri-Energy Initiative	ARDCORP	Producers	Beneficial Management Practices Specific renewable energy technologies	Cost-shared
Food Safety System Implementation Program	ARDCORP	BC food producers directly involved in growing/producing agricultural crops intended for human consumption. Your facility is on property classified for farm use and you have a current GST number. You have completed a gap analysis of one of the currently approved OFFS or HACCP program for your commodity.	Activities that assist producers to undertake an OFFS or internationally recognized approved program set-up on their farm concluding in a successful first time certification They can include (but are not limited to) addressing or working on items/activities identified on the individual gap analysis portion of their work plan, consultation services, purchase and installation of equipment, and audit activities to verify the implementation of the chosen program.	90:10 cost-share Maximum of \$3,000
Organic Sector Development Program	IAF	Any person or organization with an interest in the organic sector may apply, including primary producers, processors, handlers, members of the educational community and government and private regulators	Seizing opportunities Responding to new and emerging issues Path-finding and piloting solutions to new and ongoing issues	50:50 cost-share
Food Safety Education and Funding	Small Scale Food Processors Association	Food processors	Assistance to implement GMP and or HACCP based food safety systems	

