



BC's AGRI-FOOD

Update



Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Featuring News From the Agriculture Sector of B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

AUGUST 2006

FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

July was a busy month, with some good news and some bad. The hail storm in early July caused damage to many crops in Okanagan-area orchards. While this was an unfortunate event, our production insurance program is in place to help growers and I have committed to putting more staff in place so insurance claims can be processed quickly. I am also aware of, and keeping an eye on, the drought situation in the province, which is very difficult for farmers.

Two recent cases of BSE in Manitoba and Alberta were also a concern, but I am confident that this doesn't signal a worsening problem and that the controls we have in place are sound. The federal government also recently announced an enhanced feed ban and this is a step in the right direction that will give the international community confidence in Canada's beef supply.

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Jacqueline Dennett and Tim Ewert, an organic farmer who coordinates the local farmers' market, in front of the colourful ministry display at the market in Dawson Creek.



Clint Quesnel hard at work conducting the Vernon land use inventory.

Busy summer for Extension Assistants

The ministry's 10 Summer Extension Assistants have been busy! Here is a brief update on some of their activities so far.

Jacqueline Dennett in Dawson Creek jumped right into insect monitoring in her first week and has also worked with data from ICBC on animal-related accident trends over the last 10 years.

Daichi Shinozaki in Smithers has been developing displays for farmers' markets and fall fairs and has already attended the local farmers' market to promote ministry programs.

In Prince George, Kimberly Will and Cameron Quesnel have been working on cereal and forage crop trials. Cameron has taken the lead on the Variety Trial Program along Highway 16, which will help to determine what forage crops are viable. Kimberly has also been helping producers enter data in the age verification program.

Adrienne Montgomery is busy in 100 Mile House working with the Industrial Hemp Pilot Project. Her work has involved helping farmers with application forms, record keeping and releasing hemp seed to growers.

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We have a strong beef industry in B.C. and we are committed to supporting our cattle industry so it stays that way.

I recently announced provincial funding to help ensure youth have the opportunity to be involved in agriculture.

Government provides \$95,000 to 4-H on an annual basis and has also given a one-time grant of \$75,000 to support youth in agriculture, for a total of \$170,000. Agriculture is vital to B.C.'s economy and our aging population means that we have to start now to bridge the age gap and develop a new generation of agricultural leaders. 4-H is a great vehicle to help do that and we're proud to support them.

Throughout August, my wife and I plan to be tourists in our own province, which is without a doubt the best place on Earth. I hope you have a chance to do the same. Who knows, we may even bump into you!

Until next month,

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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Ministry of
Agriculture and Lands

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In Vernon, Dustin Griffin has presented the "Fields for your Future" program on agriculture careers at high schools and community events, and has been providing support to the 4-H program. Most of Clint Quesnel's time has been spent in three areas: working on the forage price update for the Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization program, helping with Vernon's land use inventory and various information sessions with producers and local councils.

Sharla Ziegeman's many activities have included attending an agroforestry symposium, participating in a forage tour and a field weed walk, staking grain trial plots, and work with the Fort St. John farmer's market and the North Peace Fall Fair.

Matt Masi's main responsibilities in the Kootenay region involve developing an agricultural history report for the Columbia Valley and surveying agricultural activities on lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

In the Kamloops area, Tara Dempster is becoming an expert in moisture monitoring. She has also been working on a potential direct farm marketing guide for the Thompson Nicola Regional District.

If you meet any of our students while they are out in their communities please share your stories with them! They are a great asset to the ministry and are anxious to learn all they can before the summer is over.

Aquaculture Innovation from the Hub City

Nanaimo-based PR Aqua was recently selected to provide re-circulating cold-water fish production systems for both the Ruth Burnett Sport Fishing Hatchery in Fairbanks, Alaska and the Anchorage Sport Fishing Hatchery, two of the biggest aquaculture projects in North America.

In May, PR Aqua also delivered to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game a new fish pump with wireless remote control as part of a grading and counting package for the Elmendorf Hatchery. The Wyoming Game & Fish Department has also used PR Aqua's services. In April 2006, the department took delivery of a Mobile Fish Transfer Station dewatering trailer.

PR Aqua is an innovative, solutions-oriented, B.C. company that has been providing water treatment and fish handling solutions to the public and private sector for over twenty years.

For more information on PR Aqua visit www.praqua.com.