



BC Cattlemen's Association

Director Update – November 2021

Membership: In an effort to better serve our members, BCCA will be conducting a membership review. The association will be contacting local and regional association secretaries and presidents for input and feedback. Having vibrant locals and regionals ensure that BCCA remains a grassroots association that is taking action on issues of importance to cattle producers. Association President Renee Ardill will be inviting local and regional Presidents and Secretaries to join a roundtable discussion to identify challenges and opportunities.

Supporting Local & Regional Meetings: Directors recognize that COVID-19 restrictions have impacted local and regional association meetings. Hosting virtual meetings can be challenging with rural internet and technical glitches. BCCA staff will be available to provide assistance to local and regional associations wishing to hold a virtual meeting. BCCA has a dedicated zoom account and a teleconference line that can be used free of charge for local or regional associations that wish to host a meeting.

Douglas Lake: At the end of September, the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed the Nicola Valley Fish and Game Club's application to appeal the March 5, 2021 BC Court of Appeal decision. While this is the end of the Club's ability to pursue this case, it is suspected that it will lead to increased calls for right to roam legislation. BCCA will continue to monitor the situation and advocate for the importance of private landowners to control access to private lands. (Mary MacGregor has provided an insightful article summarizing the cases printed in Beef in BC, November/December 2021, pp. 56-57).

Trespass Act Advocacy: Following the 2019 farm protest in Abbotsford, the Province committed to strengthening the *Trespass Act* though we have not seen significant action to date. The livestock industries are seeking added protection against special interest groups organizing more on-farm protests. Amendments are needed to the Act to ensure the protection of private lands from trespass. Directors renewed their support for strengthening the Trespass Act and feel it is still an important for the association to work on.

Ear Tag Retention Issues: The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) continues to address quality and retention issues with button ear tags. Producers can file a report with Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) and fill out a form for tag complaints. Including a picture of the tag is helpful. If you got a batch of faulty tags, the tag manufacturer will replace them. CCIA has done quite a bit of work to hold manufactures accountable for faulty tags and to improve the quality. Report quality control problems to CCIA via their website <https://www.canadaid.ca/traceability/approved-ccia-animal-indicators/> (Tag Quality Control Form). **New tags available** - CCIA recently announced a metal RFID tag and an upgraded version of the Destron eTag. Both are available at www.tags.canadaid.ca or 1-877-909-2333.

Livestock Protection Program: The program is down almost 100 files this year over last year. This is a good sign that the program is working to reduce predation conflict and it is suspected that the provincial government's predator control for mountain caribou is reducing conflicts. While conflicts are reduced,

this program continues to be an essential service for our members and therefore BCCA is applying to renew our permit to deliver the program provincially.

Reminder: Caribou Recovery –Engagement on Predator Reduction: the Province seeking feedback until Nov 15th on their five-year predator reduction plan to support the recovery of woodland caribou. Many caribou habitat areas overlap with range tenures and BCCA believes there is value in the ranching community adding your voices to the discussion. Visit: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/caribou/feedback-form/>

Project Funding – Species At Risk: Ranchers are eligible to apply for up to \$15,000 in funding to support conservation projects on ranches with critical habitat for species at risk. This is the 8th year that BCCA has delivered the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL). Program. With this latest round of funding, the program was able to expand to all species at risk (about 40 species) in the dry interior. Projects have focused on riparian fencing (both management and exclusion), riparian restoration and planting native species, off-stream waterers and nesting boxes. Currently seeking ranch projects for next year. Contact SARPAL@cattlemen.bc.ca

Living Labs: The federal government is providing funding to support applied agricultural research that addresses climate change. The Living Labs Initiative brings farmers, ranchers, scientists, and other collaborators together to test innovative practices and technologies. It takes research that has been done and applies to active farm and ranch operations. A network of “living labs” is being established across Canada. British Columbia is eligible to apply for \$8 Million in funding. Three project sectors have been identified: vegetable, tree fruits and beef, dairy & forage. The beef, dairy and forage project will focus on carbon sequestration and greenhouse gases. Emily MacNair with the Climate Action Initiative is leading the beef/forage project. A working group is being established to prepare the funding application for the beef project. Chairs of the committees (BPIC - Jon Solecki, ESC – Judy Madden and LSC – Werner Stump) have volunteered to be on the working group.

Rural Landowner Education: AGM resolution (21-04) asked the Beef Production & Innovation Committee (BPIC) to find ways to educate the purchasing public, realtors and lawyers about range tenures to minimize conflicts with rural property owners. The committee has done a series of videos for the realtor association and is preparing education materials for lawyers to share with clients about understanding the how range tenures work and legislation that may affect them as a rural landowner.

Water Webinar: BCCA is delivering a fall webinar with Ted van der Gulick to guide members on how to apply for a groundwater licence. The webinar will cover the documents you will need to submit your application and a walk through of an application to familiarize members with the process. Date/Time: November 30, 2021 @ 7pm. Register at <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvfugvrjsqH9Yc6tKc7yIf40sxIIYQtZjc>

Dugout Resolution: AGM resolution (21-06) asked BCCA to advocate for changes to the province’s policy around dugouts that are not lined so that potential minor seepage from groundwater not be a requirement for licensing. BCCA’s letter to the government to revise the dugout policy and immediately exempt dugouts that fill from overland flow from groundwater licensing.

Requested Funding for Dams: BCCA has submitted a proposal to the Province to establish a dam safety modernization program that will assist dam owners with inspections, maintenance and upgrades.

Agricultural dams create habitat, recreational opportunities and world class fishing for British Columbia, without support from the Province.

Letter to Auditor General re Dams: The Environmental Stewardship Committee has been working to reduce burden from dams and find funding supports for dam owners. A recent report by the Auditor General has identified compliance issues but failed to identify the need for funding supports. BCCA sent a letter to the Auditor General outlining our disappointment with the lack of financial supports for dam owners and seeking his support for BCCA's safety modernization proposal.

Indigenous Strategic Advisor: With funding from the Beef Cattle Industry Development Council, BCCA is hiring an Indigenous Strategic Advisor to help guide the Association's efforts on building positive and meaningful relations with our Indigenous neighbours. BCCA is looking forward to moving this project forward this fall.

Blueberry First Nation Court Case: The Indigenous Affairs Committee reviewed the Supreme Court decision from *Yahey v. British Columbia*. The judge ruled that the Province breached its obligation to Blueberry First Nation under Treaty 8 by permitting the cumulative impacts of industrial development to impact Blueberry's rights to hunt, fish and trap in their territory. The committee was encouraged that cumulative effects was recognized as many ranchers have raised the same concern about industrial activities on range tenures. BCCA wrote to Blueberry First Nation to acknowledge the decision, and ask to meet with them to discuss the potential impacts to ranchers in the area and explore opportunities to move forward together.

SPCA Inspections: BCCA is working with other livestock industry groups impacted by the unannounced inspections pilot program coordinated by the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC). In early September, BCAC facilitated a joint meeting between the Ministry of Agriculture, the BC SPCA and the affected livestock industry groups. At that time, no beef operations had yet to be inspected. It is anticipated that SPCA will conduct inspections on 2 beef operations before the end of November. BC SPCA has now provided industry groups with a document explaining the process they will be following for inspections. Copies are available from the BCCA office.

Additionally, the livestock industry groups have written collectively to the ministry of agriculture stating our concerns that the BC SPCA is operating outside their jurisdiction. In their reply letter, the ministry explains "that the scope of the inspections should be limited to identifying whether any animals may be in distress or at risk of distress." The ministry continues to explain that inspectors may inquire about general farm practices to help determine "whether any animals are in distress, or may be exposed to circumstances that are likely to cause an animal to be distress." Beef producers are encouraged to review the Code of Practice requirements (a copy was mailed to every BCCA member) and to contact the VBP+ program for additional training or questions. Members may also contact BCCA or their vet if the SPCA arrives for an inspection.

The Beef Production Innovation Committee is working with Verified Beef Production Plus to design an alternative to SPCA inspections.

Assurance Fund Project Update: AGM resolution (16-11) asked that we explore a vendor security fund. BCCA has contracted MNP to investigate establishing an assurance fund. As of writing this, MNP is in the beginning stages of conducting interviews with three assurance type funds - one in Alberta, one in Ontario and one in the USA - and will report back to BCCA to review and share findings with the working

group. There will be a survey that will be circulated to cattle producers across the province to garner more information for MNP, so we ask that members watch for more information in future Beef in BC's, e-news, local/regional emails and social media posts. We will circulate the link and updated research findings. This project is being tackled by the Beef Production & Innovation Committee.

Research Priorities: BCCA is asking Regional and Local Associations to generate ideas on priority research themes for the B.C. cattle industry. The themes will be distributed to researchers to assist in developing projects that are relevant to the B.C. cattle industry and will be used to inform the decisions of the Beef Production & Innovation Committee and the BCCA on what projects to support and collaborate on. Associations will be sent a letter outlining the request. Ideas should be submitted by December 1st.

Ag Days: BCCA participated in the Ag Days, organized by BC Agriculture Council (BCAC), on October 26 & 27. Held virtually this year, BCAC focussed discussions on three top priorities for agriculture: food security, water security, and labour.

FLNRORD Restructure: BCCA met with Nathan Cullen, Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations, on October 28th to discuss the Province's plans to restructure FLNRORD. BCCA is recommending the creation of a new division called 'Crown Land Agriculture Division' headed by an ADM/Chief Agrologist. The division would elevate the profile of forage and range values, ensuring a sustainable forage supply for ranching and wildlife. The ALC joined BCCA for the meeting with Hon. Nathan Cullen.

FRPA Amendments: The Land Stewardship Committee continues to pursue new measures that elevate the profile of forage resources provincially. To date, we have been focused on the second bill carrying proposed amendments to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA). We have anticipated the introduction of new legislation for over a year now, which has been delayed for several reasons, including COVID-19 as well as ensuring alignment of the bill with the requirements of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA). The BCCA and other stakeholders have recently been informed that the bill will be introduced this fall (2021) and will be a priority for this upcoming legislative session.

Invasive Plants: In AGM resolution 21-02 & 21-07 members raised concerns about a reduction in provincial funding to control invasive plants and the need for long-term funding and planning to combat the invasive plant problem. BCCA has raised the issue during a joint meeting with ADMs from ministries of environment, FLNRORD and agriculture. The Environment Committee is sending a follow-up letter to FLNRORD requesting more money be allocated to invasive plants and streamlined permitting for landowners to control weeds on Crown range.

Bear Management: AGM resolution 21-01 asked BCCA to advocate for producers to be able to legally protect their families, livestock and crops from grizzly bears. BCCA met with Minister Heyman in July to discuss wildlife and bear management. A follow-up meeting was held with the COS where BCCA proposed that when a producer has taken two non-lethal measures to deter a bear, then lethal measure should be considered a reasonable solution. BCCA is continuing to advocate for this "3 strikes" approach.

Ag in the Classroom Beef Kits: BCCA has been working with Ag in the Classroom to develop a Beef Kit with curriculum outlines and resources for secondary students. The kits will be launched before winter break and we encourage members to promote the kits to your local schools.