

Corporation of the Township of Spallumcheen¹ *Agricultural Area Plan* Summary

Spallumcheen Statistics²:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Population (2006) | 4,960 |
| Jurisdictional Area: | |
| Township | 25,884 ha |
| Plan Study Area | 25,884 ha |
| Total Area Farmed (date) | 17,155 ha |
| % of Farmland: | 54% |
| Number of Farms (date) | 450 |
| ALR | 14,002 |

Date of Agricultural Plan: August 2006

Title: Township of Spallumcheen Agricultural Area Plan Phase 3 Final Report.

Length: 28 pages.

Prepared by: Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental Consulting & Quadra Planning Consultants Ltd.

Adoption Status:

- Adopted by council resolution on November 20, 2006.

Related documents:

- Phase 1 Report: Township of Spallumcheen Agricultural Situation Profile, May 29, 2006.
- Phase 2 Report: Issues and Opportunities Analysis Working Draft, June 5, 2006
- Workshop Findings Report, July 14, 2006.

Purpose Statement:

- *“Allow profitable farming to flourish by:
Promoting best agricultural practices
Strengthening and supporting agriculture
Encouraging “good neighbour” communications
Protecting the rural character
Initiating public education.” (4)*

¹ The Township of Spallumcheen is within the North Okanagan Regional District.

² Township of Spallumcheen – Agriculture in Brief. 2009. Province of British Columbia. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

Highlights:

- *“The Township of Spallumcheen has embraced its agricultural sector and put policies and bylaws into place to meet this objective.”* (iii)
- *“The Township of Spallumcheen has commissioned this [AAP] to assist with the implementation of agricultural policies contained in the municipality’s OCP.*
- The mandate of the Agricultural Advisory Committee is to: *“ ... ensure the continuing sustainability of agriculture.”* (4)
- *“A high priority has been placed on the promotion of sustainable agriculture in the Township of Spallumcheen. Spallumcheen’s motto is: “Where farming comes first.”* (4)

Outlined Issues & Opportunities:

1. Protection of the Resource Base
 - Fragmentation of land in the ALR & small parcels
 - Lot size represents potential for rural residential incursion into ALR; small lots tend to be non-farm uses.
 - Limited availability of and obstacles to irrigation development.
 - Spillover effects from the City of Armstrong’s growth.
2. Agricultural Viability
 - High proportion of small farms, & farms with low gross farm income; average gross farm receipts declining.
 - Average age of farmers increasing.
 - Increasing farmland prices.
 - Average farm expenses are high
 - Limited local agricultural marketing
 - Increasing pressure for recreation
3. Agro-Environmental Interface
 - Agriculture in competition with residential for water.
 - Aquifer resources are at extraction capacity in some areas, vulnerable to contamination in others.
 - Opportunities for the number of Environmental Farm Plans to increase
4. Regulatory Issues
 - Pressure to rezone and subdivide lots in the ALR
 - Growth needs to be directed to existing subdivision and land outside ALR
 - Landscape buffering needs to occur in new developments
 - Monitoring of home occupations within ALR is necessary to meet zoning bylaw regulations.
 - Enforcement of bylaws is necessary to control nuisance weeds.
5. “Profile of Agriculture” Issues
 - Agricultural knowledge is not being passed on to new generations.
 - General public knows little about food production and origin.
 - The challenges of agricultural sustainability are not understood by farmers, the general public or politicians.

Outlined Goals & Strategies:

NOTE: All strategies in this summary and in the *Agricultural Area Plan* are recommendations only, provided by the consultant, the AAC, and other contributors to the farm plan. Following is a summary of the “Goals”, and “Strategies”.

1. Support and strengthen local agricultural enterprise.
 - Increase community demand for local products
 - Increase revenue that gets re-spent in community
 - Reduce the cost of doing business.
 - Remove unnecessary middlemen.
 - Promote diversification of local food products.
 - Promote diversification of agro-based suppliers
 - Promote efforts to create value-added benefits within the Township

- Provide opportunities to recruit new farmers.
 - Encourage local farmers to work together.
2. Avoid extra costs and regulation.
 - Ensure that regulations do not compromise agriculture
 - Consider crediting operations exhibiting desired behaviour.
 3. Work with the farm sector to make operations more productive and efficient.
 - Enhance access to the agricultural land base
 - Promote farm transportation plans in the interest of efficiency.
 - Support improvements that increase productivity.
 4. Protect the resource base for agriculture.
 - Discourage any encroachment on the agricultural land base.
 - Reserve water for agriculture.
 - Encourage resource use efficiency
 - Get idle agricultural land back into productive agriculture.
 5. Promote best agricultural practices.
 - Support information surrounding best agricultural practices
 - Support businesses that cater to agricultural issues.
 6. Minimize the impact of agriculture on the environment.
 - Encourage adoption of environmentally friendly practices by the agricultural sector.
 - Encourage conservation of resources.
 7. Protect rural character.
 - Develop a definition of “rural character” to guide land use
 - Ensure promotion of rural character does not jeopardize the working landscape for agriculture.
 8. Encourage “Good Neighbour” communications.
 - Encourage communication and interaction between stakeholders
 - Promote forums to facilitate communication.
 9. Initiate public education.
 - Support initiatives that inform people about agriculture.
 - Promote venues that exhibit agriculture.

Development Process/Timeline:

- Goals laid out by the AAC
- Public Open House - November 2005
- Phase 1 Report - May 2006
- Public Open House - June 2006
- Phase 2 Report Draft - June 2006
- 2 General Public Workshops - June 2006
- Phase 2 Report Completed
- Workshop Findings report - June 2006
- Phase 3 Final Report Completed - August 2006
- Public Open House - Final Report recommendations presented. - November 2006
- Council Adoption - November 2006

Township of Spallumcheen OCP Supporting Statements⁴:

- No direct reference to Spallumcheen *Agricultural Area Plan*, or an amendment containing a reference. The OCP (2004) pre-dates the Spallumcheen *Agricultural Area Plan*.
- Statements in support of agriculture:
 - The Spallumcheen OCP contains a section titled “Agricultural Land”, outlined specific policies to retain land for agricultural purposes, and to cooperate with the ALC on ALR decisions.

- “It is the primary goal of the Township of Spallumcheen to preserve the Township’s agricultural land base, the community’s rural character and environmental attributes while allowing changes in land use which will not compromise this primary goal.” (5)
- “The township does not support the transition of viable agricultural land to non-agricultural uses.” (9)

AAC Status:

- Unknown. Doesn’t appear to be active.

References to Agricultural Land Commission Act:

- None in Report 3 (*Agricultural Area Plan*).

References to the Right to Farm (Farm Practices Protection) Act:

- See above ALC description.

References to Water Rights (Canada Water Act, BC Water Act):

- None.

Notes & Observations:

- The Spallumcheen *Agricultural Area Plan* has a section titled “Key Highlights of Spallumcheen Agriculture”, outlining several characteristics of the agriculture industry of Spallumcheen, including:
 - Size of Agricultural Land Base
 - Use of Agricultural Land
 - Economic and Employment Contribution
 - Revenue Characteristics (of Census Farmers)
 - Quality of Resource Base
 - Lot Use & Farm Size Distribution
 - Farm Operators (age statistics & number of)
 - Farm Investment
 - Marketing