

District of Summerland *Agricultural Plan* Summary

Summerland Statistics¹:

Population (2006)	10,828
Jurisdictional Area:	
Regional District	7,442 ha
Plan Study Area	
Total Area Farmed (2006)	2,605 ha
% of Farmland:	24.06%
Number of Farms (2006)	248
ALR	2,804 ha

Date of AAP: July 6,2008

Title: *District of Summerland Agricultural Plan: "Time to Decide"*

Length: 67 pages

Prepared by: District of Summerland, Agricultural Advisory Committee, and a team of consultants.

Adoption Status:

- Adopted by council resolution. Bylaw 2000-342, OCP Amendment, officially added the AAP to the OCP as a Secondary Plan.

Related documents:

- Background Report #1: Summerland Agriculture Today: Resources, Economics, and Policy.
- Background Report #2: Summerland Agriculture Today: Community Interests.
 - Neither report is available on the WWW, however, each is summarized in the appendix section of the AAP document.

Purpose Statement:

- *"The primary purpose of the Agricultural Plan is to support, promote, and enhance farming within Summerland. It is also expected that the plan will advance public knowledge of the effects of urban activities on normal farming practices, and the potential impacts of farming activities on urban neighbours. This Plan will provide methods and policies which will protect and enhance the urban/rural and farmland interface."* (10)

¹ District of Summerland Agriculture in Brief. 2009. Province of British Columbia. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

Highlights:

- “... agriculture still plays a central role in [Summerland’s] economy and landscape.” (5)
- “The District is committed to protecting and enhancing agriculture, and ensuring its viability where possible.” (5)
- “The vision for agriculture in the District of Summerland is that of an industry that is sustainable both economically and environmentally. Improved cooperation between urban/rural land uses and farming activities is also sought. The plan is to achieve this objective through the realization of four goals:
 1. Creating the environment to foster an economically viable and sustainable industry.
 2. Fostering harmony between farmland and urban/rural development.
 3. Encouraging participative planning for sustainable agriculture.
 4. Creating the environment to foster an environmentally sustainable agriculture.” (6)

Outlined Issues:

- Concerns over the availability of land, water, and labour for agricultural production, including:
 - Competition for agricultural land,
 - Encroachment on agricultural land,
 - Degradation of farm land,
 - Viability of small land parcels for agricultural use,
 - Farmland and urban/rural development conflict issues,
 - Temporary farm worker housing becoming rental housing,
 - Bylaws surrounding the issue of buffering and covenants,
 - The viability of small parcels of land
 - The degradation of farmland (especially small parcels) due to non-farmer ownership.
 - The cost, supply, availability, quality and competition for water.
 - Supplying information about droughts, and water availability.
- Concerns with respect to the financial viability of their industry;
- Concerns with respect to boundaries between agricultural and non-agricultural land use;
- Issues of awareness, understanding, and support between the agricultural and non-agricultural residents of the District of Summerland;
- Potential opportunities for niche marketing, small scale food processing, development of a centre of excellence for sustainable agriculture, and nurturing new agri-food and agricultural ventures, as well as wine-tourism.

Objectives & Desired Outcomes:

1. Land Use Strategies:
 - 1.1. Compatible Strategic Land-Use Plan
 - Objective: “Ensure land is available for agricultural use.” (12)
 - Clear and coherent land use plans within the OCP, such as an urban growth boundary, sending a message to all about the intent of agricultural land.
 - 1.2. Temporary Farm Worker Housing
 - Objective: “Minimize conflict from secondary housing on the farms within the District and minimize the impact of temporary farm worker housing on agricultural lands.” (17)
 - Temporary farm worker accommodations often become permanent rental housing, creating conflict with adjacent lands; farmers should be encouraged to provide accommodations for workers off-site
 - 1.3. Buffers/setbacks adjacent to agricultural land
 - Objective: “Promote effective buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural land to reduce conflicts.” (19)
 - Conflict between land uses arises in both directions; buffers are necessary to mitigate conflict; and can be enforced through bylaw and covenant on new developments.
 - 1.4. Zoning for Clean Agri-Food Industrial Park

- Objective: *“Create an area within the District to facilitate value-added opportunities, and spin-offs from research and development.”* (20)
 - Provide an area, adjacent or in close proximity to highway frontage, for establishment of commercial enterprises, food processors and other agricultural value-added enterprises.
- 1.5. Parcel Amalgamation
- Objective: *“Promote consolidation of farms into larger, more diversified operations.”* (23)
 - A lack of scale economy and increased exposure to financial risk are arising from the Districts high number of small (less than 10 acres) farms. Large and diversified operations have a better probability of survival over the long term.
- 1.6. Farm Residential Footprints
- Objective: *“Encourage the preservation of farmland within the district for farm use.”* (25)
 - Small farm properties are attractive to non-farmer owners. “Residential Footprint” policies will encourage buildings on farmland that are conducive to the future use of the land for farming.
2. Water Use Strategies:
- 2.1. Water Supply/Demand Risk Assessment
- Objective: *“A better understanding of the risk to the water supply with each new development in the District.”* (27)
 - A comprehensive risk assessment study will generate consistent policies that encourage farmers to invest in their operations, as well as assist in better decision making for new development.
- 2.2. Source Water Protection Plan
- Objective: *“Better management of risks to the water supply in the source watershed.”* (30)
 - Identifying risks in the watershed will allow for the development of protective policies.
- 2.3. Drought Management Plan
- Objective: *“Establish a clear operational plan for the event of a multi-year drought affecting the District’s water supply.”* (32)
 - Tools to manage water supply during drought are necessary. Installation of water meters will assist of water use management.
- 2.4. Improved Water Use Information for Farmers
- Objective: *“Empower farmers to make better decision about the water resources they have available to them.”* (34)
 - Education about the importance of efficient water use will lead to reduce water usage.
- 2.5. Comprehensive Strategic Water Infrastructure Plan
- Objective: *“Provide better long-term assurances to the supply and cost of water within the District for agricultural users.”* (37).
 - Reassure farmers about the viability of their operations resulting from the supply and cost of water.
3. Awareness, Understanding and Support Strategies:
- 3.1. Increased Awareness:
- Objective: *“Increase the awareness and sensitivity of residents and visitors to Summerland’s agricultural sector.”* (39).
 - A lack of awareness is the first condition for potential conflict - an agricultural awareness program can ensure all residents and visitors are clearly aware of agriculture’s presence.
- 3.2. Increased Understanding
- Objective: *“More harmonious relations between urban and rural residents through an improved understanding of agriculture in the District by non-farming residents and visitors.”* (42)
 - Understanding is the product of education; knowledge by all of the F.P.P.A and the activities required by farmers to operate will assist in the viability of agriculture and relations between urban and rural.
- 3.3. Increased support
- Objective: *“Provide an improved sense of support for agriculture in the District.”* (44)
 - A Farmers’ Institute is being recommended as a forum for the agricultural sector. The goal is agriculturally inclusive planning processes.
4. Improving Financial Return Strategies:
- 4.1. Management Syndicates
- Objective: *“Recognize strategies which farmers can implement independent of the District to achieve the goal of economic viability through improved financial returns.”* (45)

- A common commodity syndicate, of perhaps 20 to 40 individual farmers, retaining a full-time agrologist can be successful in collaborating on common marketing and distribution.
 -
5. Better Farmland and Urban/Rural Relations Strategies:
- 5.1. Environmental Farm Plans
- Objective: *“Promote strategies that assist farmers in becoming more environmentally sensitive and help to achieve improved harmonious farmland and urban/rural relations.”* (46)
 - E.F.P.s can help farmers reduce degradation to their land, mitigate conflicts, and promote environmental sensitivity.
- 5.2. Sterile Insect Release Program Participation
- Objective: *“Facilitate programs that benefit farmers and are environmentally sensitive.”* (48)
 - This is a cross-jurisdictional program to control the codling moth populations (to the point where no additional control interventions are required.)

NOTE: All strategies in this summary and in the *Agricultural Plan* are recommendations only, provided by the consultant, the AAC, and other contributors to the farm plan.

Development Process/Timeline:

- Agricultural inventory of soils, water & climatic data was conducted for the District.
- History of Agriculture explored.
- Economic impacts of agriculture assessed.
- Report #1 released.
- Public focus groups and open houses held.
- Field tours with the AAC.
- Interviews with individuals.
- Report #2
- Further detail is unavailable through the WWW.

District of Summerland OCP Supporting Statements¹:

- The Summerland AAP is listed within the OCP as an official “Secondary Plan”, to *“provide more specific direction for the areas covered therein”*. (121)
- Agriculture policies in the OCP state that *“District policies are to: Implement the strategies as described within any adopted agricultural plan for the community.”* (33)
-
- Under Section 5.1.3.4., Residential Policies, the OCP states that *“Developments abutting lands designated as part of the A.L.R. will be required to create a landscaped buffer designed to minimize conflicts with normal agricultural operations.”*
- Other strong agricultural policies are laid out in Section 5.1.1.4 of the Summerland OCP, including:
 1. Confine residential development on ALR land to farm residences
 2. Develop a farm residence ‘Home Plate’ policy.
 3. Encourage consolidation of legal parcels to encourage more efficient agricultural operations.
 4. Promote the inclusion of productive agricultural land into the ALR
 5. Engage the Federal Government’s Agricultural Research Facility
 6. Continue to accommodate a Downtown farmers market to provide economic opportunities.
 7. Support the development of agricultural-related industries.
 8. Support agri-tourism and direct farm marketing as secondary uses (that comply with ALC guidelines & policies).
 9. Support new road, utility and communications corridors that minimize impact on agricultural operations.
 10. Ensure new urban land developments provide adequate buffers to minimize conflict with agricultural operations.
 11. Encourage retention of natural areas and unique landforms which benefit the community’s overall character, environmental well being and agricultural operations.

12. Implement the strategies as described within any adopted agricultural plan for the community.

AAC Status:

- Defunct. Last meeting January 22, 2008.
- Summerland has an APC, Its terms of Reference are to include 2 agricultural representatives. This committee hears all all development related applications, included those regarding agricultural or ALR land. Recommendations to council include input from the agricultural community. (See Summerland Bylaw # 94-002, Advisory Planning Commission Bylaw).

References to Agricultural Land Commission Act:

- Brief mention of ALC buffer standards being “inadequate, expensive and utilizing too much land.”

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

- Mention of the relationship of the F.P.P.A and the communities understanding of agricultural practices; the Act can help to educate the general public when combined with education programs.

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

- None.