



BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia

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March 29, 2010

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: For Improving the Agricultural Land Reserve

FOOD SECURITY

The Province's food security is dependent upon healthy lands, access to adequate water supplies and skilled ranchers and farmers to work the land. Equal consideration must be given to the people, land and water needed to produce food, now and in the future. These are the cornerstones of the food security. **THE BC CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDS** the following actions to encourage viable ranching operations as a way to ensure British Columbia's food security:

Industry Support

The success of the Agricultural Land Reserve is dependent upon healthy lands, access to water and skilled ranchers. Without all three, the Province will not meet its food security goals. The Province must recognize its responsibility for creating policies and regulations that enhance the industry and where this is not possible, the Province create options for ranchers to exit the industry.

1. Recommend that government implement the Beef Value Creation Program as endorsed by the Ranching Task Force.
2. The Provincial government work to implement the regulatory recommendations outlined in the Ranching Task Force report (Dec 2009) that will ensure the ranching industry's access to critical land and water resources.

Implementation of Ecological Goods & Services Payments

3. The Agricultural Land Commission should allow for the purchase and banking of development credits and conservation covenants or other conservation tools. Covenants and other conservation tools must not exclude agriculture as the primary land use.
4. The Provincial government should fund an Ecological Good & Services program which financially rewards agricultural producers for their ecological contributions. This program should include a carbon sequestration credit system.

Alternate Land Use

5. Alternate Land Use activities must be reversible thereby allowing at any time in the future, agriculture to be carried out on that parcel, and must not be detrimental to the water resources or the environment.



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6. In order to provide additional farm income, Local Governments and the Agricultural Land Commission should provide flexibility to carry out activities that do not conflict or impede agricultural interests.
7. The Provincial government and Agricultural Land Commission should create guidelines to ensure afforestation activities for the purpose of carbon sequestration do not impede the arability of that parcel of land for agricultural purposes and must be returned to a state that is conducive for farming or ranching.

Multiple Homesites

8. The Agricultural Land Commission should only allow additional residences when legitimate farm need for ranch labour and/or succession exists.
9. That new homesite applications made to Local Governments be referred to the Agricultural Land Commission for review and approval.

GOVERNANCE *of the* LAND RESERVE

The BC Cattlemen's Association urges the Agricultural Land Commission to adhere to its mandate "To preserve agricultural land and encourage and enable farm businesses throughout British Columbia" and review existing procedures that may be impeding rather than enabling farm businesses. **THE BC CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDS** the following actions regarding the Agricultural Land Commission and governance of the Land Reserve:

Mandate

10. The Agricultural Land Commission should adhere to their mandate to preserve agricultural land, and encourage and enable farm businesses throughout BC.

Governance

The Agricultural Land Commission should:

11. Annually review existing Delegation of Authority agreements with Regional Districts to better protect agricultural land and land owner's rights.
12. Periodically review the Delegation of Authority agreement between the Agricultural Land Commission and the Oil & Gas Commission. This review must involve an open discussion with all interested agricultural land owners be fully transparent and meaningful.
13. Improve their governance by ensuring all Agricultural Land Commission Regional Panel members have significant agricultural expertise and knowledge.
14. Ensure the Regional Panels uniformly apply the Agricultural Land Commission's guidelines for decision making.
15. Ensure the Chair of the Agricultural Land Commission has significant agricultural experience.

Appeal Process

16. The Agricultural Land Commission must improve its transparency by establishing an open and effective appeal process that is supported by the agricultural community.

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LAND USE PLANNING

The BC Cattlemen's Association believes that improvements are needed to minimize the impact on the ranching community from urban and rural development. The effects of sprawl can be mitigated with better community development and coordinated land use planning. **THE BC CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDS** the following actions regarding Community Development & Land Use Planning:

Density Levels

17. The Agricultural Land Commission should ensure that density level plans are in place and met before considering an application to expand the municipal boundary onto Agricultural Land Reserve lands.

Water Needs

18. All levels of government and the Agricultural Land Commission must consider the present and future water needs for agriculture and ensure these needs are given priority over:

- Subdivisions or community expansion,
- Oil & Gas development, and
- Other industrial uses.

19. The practice by the Oil & Gas Industry of deep injection of water that is suitable for agricultural purposes should be stopped. BCCA is concerned about the potential to contaminate fresh water aquifers if lower quality or non-fresh water sources (i.e. salt water or treated sewer/storm water) are used instead.

Tenure Security

20. All levels of government must recognize the importance of Crown range tenures to the viability of ranching operations.

Planning

21. Local Governments should have an Official Community Plan which sets density levels and includes a Water Use Plan.

22. Local Governments should develop Agriculture Area Plans to complement their Official Community Plan which addresses the agriculture's current and future water needs. The Agriculture Area Plan is a way to recognize farming, ranching and cattle grazing interests within the community.

23. All Regional Districts should establish Agricultural Advisory Committees.

24. Local Governments and the Agricultural Land Commission should harmonize their list of permitted uses on ALR lands.

25. Local Governments and the Agricultural Land Commission should work to streamline the application process for landowners.

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SOLUTIONS

26. The Province should establish an Agricultural Land Reserve Fund for the purpose of supporting farmers / ranchers and encouraging farming activities on ALR lands.

Agricultural Land Reserve Fund

Lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve play an essential role for British Columbia's future food security. These lands continued to be undervalued and remain under threat from urban and rural sprawl, afforestation, recreation and industrial development. Establishing an Agricultural Land Reserve Fund would allow all of society to support British Columbia's farmers and ranchers while ensuring the continued protection of lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Contributors to the Agricultural Land Reserve Fund should be:

- a) Land that is removed from the Land Reserve for residential, commercial or industrial purposes should direct a portion of their annual property taxes to the ALR Fund.
- b) The Province should contribute the monetary difference between assessed land value for agriculture and the value of that land if it was not bound by the Land Reserve; this would include lands within a municipality.
- c) Individuals or Corporations that purchase ALR lands for the purpose of speculation or development (i.e., anyone that does not meet the requirement of a bonafide farmer) should pay the difference between agricultural and residential tax into the Fund.
- d) Individuals or Corporations that purchase ALR lands for the purpose of afforestation to offset their carbon footprint should pay a **\$/acre¹** levy into the Fund.

The Agricultural Reserve Fund could be a source of revenue for an Ecological Goods & Services program.

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¹ Afforestation Levy: Discussion & decision is still needed on the value of this levy (\$/acre or \$/m³), collection (lump sum or annual payment) and who would collect the levy.