Re-connecting agriculture with land use policy

British Columbia, Canada

October 28, 2011

Presented by Dave Sands
Congratulations to Casey Stoney
10 Provinces – 3 Territories

Land area: 998 million hectares
Population: 34,349,236
CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS

- Government of Canada (Ottawa)
- Provincial and Territorial Governments
- Regional, Local Governments and First Nations
Recognizing the importance of sustaining farmland and farmers for our FOOD SUPPLY
Over 10,000 years ago, the nomads ushered in a new way of life for mankind – farming, the basis of civilization.
Giza Pyramids - Cairo, Egypt
Newgrange Tomb - Ireland
4,000-year-old farming tax to end

CHINA | Established in the Bronze Age, the tax on crops will be eliminated over five years

BY ALEXA OLESEN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING — Before Confucius, before the Great Wall, before chopsticks, it was a part of China: A tax on farmers’ crops. Now this vestige of feudalism, established 4,000 years ago during the Bronze Age, is headed the way of the emperors.

The Chinese government’s plans to abolish the tax within five years are being lauded by some as history-making and dismissed by others as an empty gesture for a neglected sector that provides cheap migrant labour for factories and construction sites.

China had an agricultural tax as early as the Xia Dynasty around 2200 BC. The tax was a principal source of revenue for subsequent dynastic governments, but has now winnowed to about three per cent.

Last week, at the opening of the 2004 session of China’s annual legislature, Premier Wen Jiabao said the government would lavish new attention on the countryside and eliminate the tax for good.

“We must take more direct and effective policies and measures to strengthen, support and protect agriculture and increase rural incomes,” Wen said.

Beginning this year, the eight per cent agricultural tax rate will be reduced gradually until it is scrapped entirely within five years. Only tobacco will still be taxed. The move is expected to cut financial burden on farmers by about $770 million Cdn annually.

The official Xinhua News Agency said news of the move had “filled farmers with joy.”

In Beijing, congressional delegate Wen Lihua from China’s Southeastern Zhejiang province called it “a very important and historic piece of news.”

“[It] will, in effect, lift a great burden from a large number of people,” Wen said as he stood outside the Great Hall of the People on Tiananmen Square the day after the announcement.

Farmers’ burdens are high on the government’s mind as it pushes its efforts to create a “well-off society” — and, by extension, reduce the potential for unrest that could threaten its grip on power. Ensuring that Chinese farmers can make a living also is important because of China’s history of famine. It considers self-sufficiency in grain as pivotal to national security and stability.
State of the World Population

- Current world population will be 7 billion (2011)

- World Net Population Growth = 1 new City of Adelaide every 5 days
Figure 3. Population and Arable Land in Developing Countries

Growth of population
Billions, 1961–2050

Arable land per capita
Hectares, 1961–2050

Source: UNFPA/FAO

Population Reports
Asia (Vietnam)
North America (USA)
South America (Ecuador)
Oceania (Australia)
Issues for BC agriculture prior to 1973

Losing agricultural land to urban uses – over 6000 hectares of prime farmland per year

Local governments’ bylaws unfairly restricted and prohibited agriculture - urban edge encroachment

Nuisance suits occurring against farm practices

No strong environmental farm practices

Lack of public awareness of food production
Farmland in the USA

Over 50 hectares of prime farmland are being lost every hour

Equivalent to BC’s total protected farmland being urbanized in 10 years

Threatened farmland produces:

- 79% of fruits
- 69% of vegetables
- 52% of dairy goods

American Farmland Trust – 2004
South West Richmond - 1963
South West Richmond - Today
BRITISH COLUMBIA
• **Agricultural Land Commission Act – enacted 1973**

• Established the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

• Approximately 5% of the provincial land base- 4.7 million hectares

• Established Provincial Land Commission
1973 - 2001
Original decisions on the ALR was by a Provincial body over the total Province

2001 - present
Regional Commission Panels now have full power in their six regions of the Province.
Commission Panel Regions in BC
Land Commission - Main Functions

• Review applications for exclusion, subdivision or non-farm uses within the ALR

Review Official Community Plans to ensure they meet the policies of the ALC Act

• Participate in planning committees, public presentations and any other functions that will enhance the protection and enhancement of farming within the ALR

• Decision makers for the “Property Management Program” from 1973 - 1988
Agricultural capability
Classes 1 to 7
Classes can change with land management
Ag. Capability is class 5 due to wetness

Drainage pipes installed to remove excess water
Ag capability changed to Class 2 with drainage and now growing a wide range of vegetables.
Ag capability is class 5 or 6 because of aridity

Ag capability improved to class 2 or 1 with irrigation
Agricultural Land Reserve

• Based on land capability but also

• Recognized as only area in which BC agriculture can produce and expand
Abbotsford property refused exclusion over 25 years ago now an operating poultry farm with forage production
Population & Agriculture

Two Areas of B.C.

Contain:

• **2.7%** of Provincial Land Area

• **81%** of BC’s Population (2001)

• **81%** of Annual Gross Farm Receipts
WARNING COMING SOON “HOGS” ALONG PROPERTY LINE
The need for “Edge Planning”
Established new “right to farm” legislation

Amendments to sections in the *Local Government Act*

Made amendments to the *Land Titles Act*
Strengthening Farming in BC
Right to Farm section

• Protects farmers from nuisance suits and court injunctions

• Farmers must operate under “normal farm practices”

• Farmers must meet the Health Act, Pesticide Control Act and the Waste Management Act

• Farmers must obey approved local government bylaws

• Review board to handle complaints, determine “normal farm practices”
Strengthening Farming in British Columbia

A Guide to Implementation of the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act

SEPTEMBER, 1996
Environmental Protection

WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT

Agricultural Waste Control regulation
Open Burning Smoke Control regulation

Code of Agricultural Practice

Environmental Guidelines
ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES
FOR
GREENHOUSE GROWERS in
British Columbia

ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES
FOR
POULTRY PRODUCERS in
British Columbia

ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR DAIRY
Support Products

A booklet explaining Farm Practices for people living in and near farm areas.

The Countryside and You

Understanding Farming
Amendments to the Local Government Act

• Stops local governments from unduly restricting or prohibiting agriculture in zoning and bylaws

• Requires local governments to use Ministry agricultural standards

• Local governments must get approval from the Minister of Agriculture to deviate from standards

• Minister of Agriculture may approve “farm bylaws” for specific cases
Support Products

- A major Guide document to assist in the review and updating of Bylaws
Tables for setbacks of principal farm buildings, structures and areas from lot lines and water.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setbacks from</th>
<th>Apiculture</th>
<th>Greenhouse, Nursery, Specialty Wood, &amp; Turf Crops</th>
<th>Livestock, Poultry, Game, &amp; Fur</th>
<th>Mushrooms</th>
<th>Tree, Vine, Field, &amp; Forage Crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed Urban Area — Edge lot line</td>
<td>15 m</td>
<td>7.5 m</td>
<td>30 - 60* m</td>
<td>30 m</td>
<td>15 m for boilers &amp; walls w/fans otherwise 7.5 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot Lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior &amp; Front</td>
<td>7.5 m</td>
<td>7.5 m</td>
<td>15 - 30* m</td>
<td>15 m</td>
<td>7.5 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior &amp; Rear</td>
<td>7.5 m</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
<td>15 - 30* m</td>
<td>7.5 m</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All lot lines (except edge)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>15 m for boilers &amp; walls w/fans</td>
<td>15 m for boilers &amp; walls w/fans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Water Supply Intake</td>
<td>6 m</td>
<td>6 m</td>
<td>30 m</td>
<td>30 m</td>
<td>6 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Stream</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
<td>15 or 30** m</td>
<td>15 m</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructed Ditch</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
<td>15 or 30** m</td>
<td>15 m</td>
<td>4.5 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** These setbacks from water are currently under review.

**PRINCIPAL FARM BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, & AREAS FOR THE GROUPED COMMODITIES**

- hives, honeyhouse shelters
- greenhouse
- boiler room
- header house
- machine storage
- crop storage
- barn
- brooder house
- confined
- livestock area
- fur farming shed
- hatchery
- livestock shelter
- milking facility
- stable
- mushroom barn
- cider
- crop storage
- direct farm marketing
- granary
- on-farm processing
- on-farm product preparation
Amendments to the Land Titles Act

- Approve development permit areas adjacent to farming and may request adequate buffering, etc. to protect agriculture

- Ensure community plans include polices for agricultural maintenance and enhancement and referred to the ALC for approval
Support Products

- A guide for subdivision Approving Officers
- A booklet to assist the Public & Approving Officers
Support Products

A comprehensive guide encouraging planning for agriculture’s long term future.
Planning with Local Governments

**Agri - Teams** with representation from:
- Local Government
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Agricultural Land Commission

**Agricultural area plans**
- planning for agriculture’s needs
- promote land use compatibility

**Agricultural Advisory Committees**
- appointed by local governments
- farming community involved
- day to day/broader issues
Siting residences in the Agricultural Land Reserve
Objective:

To establish a framework of land use policies, regulations and programs that enhance optimum land use and compatibility along both sides of the urban/ALR boundary.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
Establish Edge Planning policy

May define critical edges

Contain a DPA for the protection of farming

Give policy direction for an Ag Area Plan
Edge Planning...Implementation

Part of a package of planning processes

- Official Community Plan
- Agr. Area Plan
- Edge Planning Process
Forest or Urban?
Developing standards for both sides of the rural/urban edge
Edge Planning Areas
- 300 m each side of ALR boundary -

- most significant impacts are felt within this area
- research supports 300 m
- already existing 300 m urban-side DPAs
Edge Planning….urban side

**COMMON SUBDIVISION PLAN**

- Lot 1
- Lot 3
- Lot 4
- Non-ALR Lot 2

**IMPROVED SUBDIVISION PLAN**

- Vegetative Buffer
- Fence
- No Road Endings

ALR
Non Farm-friendly Urban Development

Road Design

PART 3 - Urban-side Edge Planning Tools
Farm-friendly Urban Development

Road Design
Urban-side buffer design criteria

Below are the setback distances for principal buildings and design criteria for installing an urban-side buffer along the ALR boundary. This is followed with four examples of design specifications and layouts.

**Urban-Side Setback & Buffer Design Criteria for Urban-ALR EPAs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Setback Distance and Buffer Size</th>
<th>Buffer Height</th>
<th>Buffer Design Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban-side Residential Setback &amp; Buffer</td>
<td>30 m from ALR boundary</td>
<td>6 m ** (finished height)</td>
<td>• Mixed planting of fast growing tree and shrub species with foliage from base to crown – long thin foliage desirable. Include at least 60% evergreen conifers to collect dust &amp; spray drift.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buffer Width: 15 m – buffer is located within the 30 m setback</td>
<td><strong>See Note 2 below</strong></td>
<td>• No gaps in buffer and no tightly packed hedges; crown density of 50-75%. Design as wedge shaped if colour dilution desired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Setback 15 m from ALR boundary</td>
<td>6 m ** (finished height)</td>
<td>• Design specifications and layout will be as per urban-side Buffer A or B (p. 24); or existing vegetation may be retained as part of buffer (Buffer C, p.26).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban-side Non-Residential Setback &amp; Buffer</td>
<td>8 m – buffer is located within the 15 m setback</td>
<td><strong>See Note 2 below</strong></td>
<td>• Leave 2 m of low growing or no vegetation from ALR boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. passive recreation, industrial, or commercial)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• If paths and passive recreational uses (e.g. picnic areas) are part of the landscaped buffer, the recreational features will not take up more than 1/3 the width of the buffer and they will be located away from the ALR boundary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note 1:** Exception to Level 1 Residential Urban-side Buffer requirements:

Residential parcels that are separated from the ALR by a road allowance can reduce the size of the Level 1 buffer provided new driveway accesses from these parcels onto the subject road allowance are avoided or minimized. The sizing of the residence should still be 30 m but the vegetative buffer can be reduced to a 7.5 metre width and located as near and parallel to the ALR boundary as possible.

**Note 2:**

If spray drift is a concern, tree height should be 1.5 times the spray release height or target height, whichever is higher.

Information about developing trails in farm and ranch areas, including "A Guide to Trail Development in Farm and Ranch Areas", can be found at [www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/trails/index.htm](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/trails/index.htm)
Urban-side EPA Example

Special management guidelines for urban development should consider:
- rain water management
- building design
- subdivision design and road layout
- disclosure statements
- buffer signage
- buffer design, use & maintenance

300 m Urban-side Edge Planning Area

Siting & building standards as per existing zoning & building requirements

Backyard (No Principal Residential Bldgs.)

Vegetative Buffer

15 m

Agricultural Area

ALR Boundary
Urban-side Edge Planning Tools

Disclosure on title

Development Permit Area on the urban side to implement these measures

Redevelop to create buffer on urban side
Farm-Side Edge Planning Tool

Farm Bylaw

A local government may use a farm bylaw to regulate farming activities in the ALR
Setback Distances

The following setback distances apply to buildings and structures located within designated EPAs. Setback distances are measured from the ALR:Urban boundary.

15 metres for:
- Greenhouses
- Crop storage

30 metres for:
- Mushroom barns
- Spent compost storage

50 metres for:
- Boilers
- Open loading areas
- Refrigeration units

100 metres for:
- Agricultural solid waste storage
- Composting and finished compost storage
- Confined livestock areas (except horse paddocks which can be set back 15 m)\(^a\)
- Feed mill and feed storage\(^a\)
- Incinerators
- Livestock and poultry housing\(^a\)
- Manure storage\(^a\)
- Milking facilities\(^a\)
- Silage Storage\(^a\)

\(^a\) The setback for these buildings and structures can be reduced to 60 metres (horse paddocks can be set back 7 metres) provided the additional management requirements on pages 42-44 are met.
Setback & Management Requirements

0-60 m
Certain structures prohibited

60-100 m
Requirements for some structures

0-300 m
Special management of:
- Manure
- Dust & fly control
- Hours of operation

Area outside of 300 m not affected by Edge Planning

Sample Property
Edge Planning....farm side

Location of ventilation fans in barns to prevent odours from blowing into urban areas
Sample of setback and buffering to reduce odour and dust on neighbours
Edge Planning...

1. Urban-side acceptance
2. ALC promoting concept
3. Permanency to the edge
Edge Planning...

A successful edge by using the sloped topography as the buffer.
Edge Planning...

Educating the public on the importance of the buffer

ACTIVE FARMING AREA
You are next to an active farming area along the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary.
This buffer is for the benefit of both you and our farmers.
Please respect the buffer and the neighbouring farmland
Edge Planning…Outcomes

1. Urban-rural compatibility
2. Land uses optimized
3. Shared responsibility
4. Permanency to the current ALR boundary
The more data layers incorporated in collecting the information will allow for a better analysis of the land base.
Land Use Changes

District of Pitt Meadows, BC

1996
440 ha of blueberries on 76 parcels

2002
830 ha of blueberries on 114 parcels
Need for better urban planning

7 temporary parking spaces per vehicle
What does it look like?

Smart Growth BC
Early business failures
“Awareness gets you support!”

Examples:

- UBCM annual farm tours
- Local government council farm tours
- On farm market gardens
- Bicycle farm tours
Try anything to promote agriculture!
THIS YEAR, FARMERS CAN HELP TO CULTIVATE MORE THAN JUST LAND.
BC Agriculture in the Classroom
Growing Resources for Educators

Who are We?

BC’s award winning Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation is a non-profit organization that through its various programs works with educators to bring BC’s agriculture to their students. The Foundation is supported by teachers, registered dietitians, post secondary educators, government specialists and agricultural producers.

To make a charitable gift or to get involved in this exciting opportunity please contact:

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation
Abbotsford Agriculture Centre
1767 Angus Campbell Road,
Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3

Phone: 604.556.3088 Fax: 604.556.3030
Email: info@aitc.ca

web site: www.aite.ca/bc

“Working with educators to bring BC’s agriculture to our students.”
How to sustain BC agriculture

- Protect the farmland
- Support and protect the farmer’s right to farm
- Plan for agriculture for the long term
- Ensure efficient urban planning
- Ensure farms operate in environmentally sound ways
- Establish a strong agricultural awareness
The Farmer’s Environment

- Environmental Influences
- Raising a Family
- Land Prices
- Input Costs vs Returns
- Labour Supply & Quality
- Local Government Planning
- Government Policies & Regulations

- Animal Welfare
- Food Safety
- Consumer Attitudes
- Urban vs Rural Conflicts
- Neighbour vs Neighbour Conflicts
- Resource Use Conflicts
- Pollution Control Standards

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The Face Of Famine

Live Aid - 1985
“It was one of the best hugs I’ve ever had,” Madonna said after her emotional meeting with former famine victim Birhan Woldu. “But you can’t sing and cry at the same time.”
Value of agricultural land for food for 100 acres/10 years

• Broccolli = 8,000,000 lbs
• Carrots = 26,000,000 lbs
• Raspberries = 7,000,000 lbs
• Blueberries = 10,000,000 lbs
“We did not inherit the earth from our parents. We are borrowing it from our children.” —Native American saying