

EXTENSION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **Extension Committee** held virtually via Teams on Thursday January 21, 2025.

Members Present:

Asha Wareham
Barbara Hall
Beth Cavers
Chris Zabek
Evan Esch (CO-CHAIR)
Isabella Rivero
Jesse MacDonald
Juliana Cao
Kate Durisek
Lindsay Hainstock
Love-Ese Chile
Matt Walz
Naomi Delury
Nick Ibuki
Ruth King
Shamore Watson
Shelby Austen

BC Agricultural Climate Action Research Network
UBC Okanagan
BC Cherry Association
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program
BC Wine Grape Council
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
BC Food Web
BC Wine Grape Council
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food
BC Agricultural Climate Action Research Network
Terralink Horticulture
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
Summerland Varieties Corp
UBC Okanagan
BC Fruit Works
Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

Regrets:

Gail Nelson
Katelyn Hengel
Kellie Garcia (CO-CHAIR)
Sera Lean

BC Fruit Growers' Association
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food
Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project
Evergro – Nutrien Ag Solutions

1. WELCOMING REMARKS

The committee welcomed new members Matt Walz and Barbara Hall.

2. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS		
MEMBER	ACTION REQUIRED	STATUS
Kellie Garcia	Contact committee consultant suggestions for DAS expansion to wine grapes (Galen Barnhardt, Christine Bruneau, Ken Sapsford)	✓
Evan Esch	Connect with WSU colleagues RE: IPM working group/conference involvement	✓
Shelby Austen/Asha Wareham	Connect RE: Hannah Wittman (UBC)	✓
Shelby Austen	Send out calendar invites to members for 2025 meeting dates.	✓

3. MEMBER ROUND TABLE UPDATES

- Juliana shared that ACARN is hosting a three-part science communication workshop in February, focused on helping researchers at all levels communicate their findings to producers. She will also share research briefs at the Pacific Agriculture Show this week to gather feedback.

- Lindsay highlighted the strong response from exhibitors and growers for the upcoming Southern Interior Horticulture Show (SIHS) and mentioned the Ministry's monthly regional newsletter as a helpful resource for programs and events. She thanked Love-Ese for collaborating to prepare graduate students for presenting their research at SIHS, noting it as a valuable connection she hopes becomes a regular practice. Lindsay also shared her excitement about the video dubbing project on winter grape damage and Ambrosia pruning, with translations available in English, Punjabi, and Spanish.
- Barbara informed the committee that she is studying grapevines and climate resiliency and is currently in the project's early development stages.
- Jesse noted that AAFC researchers will present at the SIHS and participate in the knowledge transfer event. This summer, AAFC plans to launch commodity days at the research station, featuring research updates, breakout discussions, and field tours. These events are tentatively planned to alternate yearly with research open houses. He also hopes regional research meetings will begin this year, with an initial focus on cold mitigation.
 - Kate suggested aligning these efforts with the Triggs Lecture Series.
- Nick noted he is currently focusing on apple storage and attending trade shows.
- Love-Ese shared that ACARN recently held a successful two-day Land to Lab workshop, which explored soil and water research across the province. Resources are available for those who missed it.
- Chris mentioned Southern Irrigation plans to follow up last year's field days with workshops for tree fruit and grape growers this season. He will share details with the group as plans develop.
- Beth reminded the group that the BCCA Annual General Meeting is on February 14, featuring research updates, presentations, and more.
- Naomi provided an update on the co-creation workshop in Montreal, which included a virtual component in English. Gail Nelson represented BC growers well, and she expects research to emerge from the issues Gail outlined, though it is still in the early stages.
- Ruth shared that she has moved to UBC as the Wine Research Coordinator. She is currently working on strategic planning and intends to consult regularly with the industry. She will also support six students presenting at the SIHS.
- Isabella shared that she attended the Agricultural Excellence Conference in November. She also noted that BCWGC is exploring collaborations with Kelowna's Agritech Innovation Program on data analysis and AI to improve efficiency.
- Kate noted that the Centre for Agritech Innovation has offered to help with a cross-commodity data strategy and mapping project with CCLSP. She shared progress on the Best Practices Guide Steering Committee, which is moving forward with a consistent and process-oriented approach for uptake. Promotion plans include the website, QR codes, and newsletters. The BCWGC's R&D committee meeting for February will focus on cold damage impacts on vines. Additionally, she is developing a social media strategy for Sustainable Winegrowing BC and the Best Practices Guide.
- Shamore updated the group on BC Fruit Works, which is wrapping up with the creation of evergreen promotional materials and a comparison of data from the last three years to inform long-term strategy recommendations.

Upcoming Events Mentioned in the Roundtable Discussion:

For more information on upcoming events, please visit the [CCLSP Events Calendar](#).

Pacific Agriculture Show	Jan 23-25, 2025
Seeding Success Communications Workshop	Feb 4, 11, 18, 2025
Southern Interior Horticulture Show	Feb 12-13, 2025
BC Cherry Association AGM	Feb 14, 2025
BC Fruit Growers Association AGM	Feb 20, 2025
BCWGC R&D Third Thursday Meeting	Feb 20, 2025
Building Bridges Extension Conference	Feb 27-28, 2025

4. OLD BUSINESS

4.1 CURRENT PROJECTS: UPDATE

a) BC DAS OPERATIONS

- Shelby informed the committee that Molly Thurston will continue as the horticulture consultant for BC DAS and is already preparing for the 2025 season. Her work includes updating handouts and resources, engaging with WSU programmers, developing a grower engagement strategy, and recruiting new users. Molly will also represent BC DAS at upcoming industry events. The BC DAS steering committee also continues to meet, with new grape specialists added to support the transition to the winegrapes project.

b) BC DAS EXPANSION TO WINEGRAPES

- Shelby updated the committee that Galen Barnhardt from Barn to Bottle Consultant was hired in December to complete phase 1 of the BC DAS expansion project. His goal is to determine the requirements, feasibility, and benefits of the expansion. While conducting interviews with industry stakeholders, he has already identified five key barriers.
 - **Funding:** Sustaining the program remains a challenge, though the expansion is not expected to experience significant short-term costs, and the licensing agreement with WSU will remain unaffected. The WGITF has additional funds available over the next two years, which could support the project, particularly under the task force's data-sharing initiatives.
 - **Resource materials:** The best practice guide, last updated in 2010, is currently undergoing a revision to align with current Ministry of Agriculture spray recommendations. Any expansion of BC DAS should integrate this updated guide to ensure relevance and accuracy.
 - **Appropriate models:** While models exist, none have been thoroughly vetted for BC's climate. WSU has recently added two grape-specific models to their system—a bloom predictor for 10 grape varieties and a nematode model. A meeting with WSU is planned to discuss these technical requirements.
 - **User uptake:** The success of the expansion depends on sufficient user adoption. More research is needed to identify potential volunteers for beta testing and to assess their willingness to dedicate time and resources.
 - **Academic backing:** Local academic support is promising but still developing. For instance, Dr. Urbez-Torres expressed interest in modelling if the DAS system expands to include grapes, though it has not been a focus for him to date.

c) 2024 AGRICULTURE TOUR

- Shelby noted that the Agriculture in Action bus tour was held in Lake Country on November 6, bringing together local government staff and producers to discuss challenges and solutions related to agricultural policies and regulations. The tour visited four sites: Royal Fruit Packers, Jealous Fruits' worker housing site, Dorenberg Orchards, and Intrigue Wines. Feedback was mostly positive, highlighting the need for simpler regulations, solution-focused dialogue, and better public education to address misconceptions about agriculture, such as worker housing and living within the ALR.

She also shared that the south tour, originally planned for the fall, has been rescheduled for April 2 in the Penticton area. This tour will focus on elected officials and staff.

- Chris mentioned that the City of Kelowna is keen for more agriculture tours, and that he will reach out for more details.

ACTION ITEMS	
MEMBER NAME	ACTION REQUIRED
Chris Zabek/Shelby Austen	Connect RE: 2025 Agriculture Tour

4.2 2025 EXTENSION CONFERENCE

- Shelby shared the draft conference program for committee feedback. The program includes a leadership workshop on conflict resolution, a roadmaps workshop, a keynote on farmer-to-farmer movements and climate change motivations, and a broader industry discussion on extension priorities.
 - The committee agreed that a cross-commodity approach is more effective than separate commodity-specific priorities.
 - Naomi suggested adding a timeline of key biological events for each commodity, like cherry bloom, to assist with the roadmaps workshop.
 - Love-Ese recommended incorporating the Minister of Agriculture's mandate letter into discussions to align with provincial goals.
 - Jesse highlighted last year's presentation on AAFC's 10-year strategic plan and noted that the industry discussion could help identify overlaps between industry, provincial, and federal priorities.

ACTION ITEMS	
MEMBER NAME	ACTION REQUIRED
All members	Provide grower recommendations to Shelby RE: Industry Discussion

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 PRIORITIES AND PROJECTS FOR 2025

- Evan informed the committee that funding is still available for extension projects and encouraged members to bring forward project ideas for discussion. He emphasized that CCLSP is available to assist with planning and execution.

6. ADJOURNMENT

- The next Extension Committee meeting will be held on April 8, 2025, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.