

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Date:	January 28, 2025
Time:	9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (lunch to follow)
Location:	In person: RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom, 1450 KLO Rd, Kelowna Virtual: Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 218 664 718 36 Passcode: BL8F48

MEETING AGENDA

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Recommended Motion

"THAT the January 28, 2025, meeting agenda be adopted as presented."

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (Page 2)

Recommended Motion

"THAT the November 26, 2024, meeting minutes be adopted as presented."

4. **ROUND TABLE UPDATES FROM MEMBERS**

5. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

5.1 CCLSP Committees and Communications (Page 8)

5.2 Stabilization Fund: Financial Update (Page 10)

5.3 Current Cross-Commodity Projects (Page 11)

5.4 Cross-Commodity Project Development and Funding Applications (Page 18)

5.5 Discussion of other Issues and Opportunities

6. **OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 Format of Cross-Commodity Advisory Council meetings

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be held virtually via Teams on **March 20**, 2025, 9:00-10:30.

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Cross-Commodity Advisory Council** held in-person at RDCO's Woodhaven Boardroom and virtually via MS Teams on November 26, 2024.

PRESENT

Adrian Arts
Beth Cavers
Gord Morrison
Kate Durisek
Madeleine van Roechoudt
Melissa Tesche
Michelle Cook
Nikki Callaway
Ryan Ostertag
Sukhpaul Bal
Tyrion Miskell
Walter Makepeace

BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food
BC Cherry Association
Consolidated Fruit Packers
BC Wine Grape Council
Grower at Large
BC Fruit Growers' Association
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program
BC Wine Grape Council
Consolidated Fruit Packers
BC Cherry Association
BC Grapegrowers' Association
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program

REGRETS

Jesse MacDonald

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

GUESTS

None

STAFF

Kellie Garcia
Shamore Watson
Shelby Austen

CCLSP Project Director
CCLSP Domestic Labour Lead
CCLSP Administration & Communications Manager

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Kellie Garcia, CCLSP Project Director, called the meeting to order at 9:06 am.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by: Beth Cavers

Seconded by: Sukhpaul Bal

"THAT the November 26, 2024, meeting agenda be approved as presented."

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by: Melissa Tesche

Seconded by: Walter Makepeace

"THAT the September 5, 2024, meeting minutes be adopted as presented."

CARRIED

4. ROUND TABLE UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

- Michelle shared that the codling moth season ended successfully, with the SIR program meeting its damage threshold targets. Improvements to traps resulted in increased wild captures. Apple movement throughout the valley increased due to the BCTF closure. Outreach efforts are underway with packing houses to provide education and facilitate online access to capture data.
- Kate reported that the BCWGC R&D Committee met in person for the first time in five years at SRDC to connect institutions and stakeholders. Resource challenges at the research centre remain due to retirements. The KTT Committee is focused on sharing research results, improving website accessibility for members, and promoting SWBC in the Best Practices Guide. A health and safety roadmap has been developed to clarify organizational roles. The Wine Grape Industry Task Force is hiring a program manager, who may participate in future CCAC meetings. Kate emphasized the task force's efforts to build on stabilization work and align with the cross-commodity forward-focused model.
- Beth shared that the short crop shaped much of the summer's focus, particularly on cold mitigation and damage. With only 20% of the regular crop harvested, early signs suggest a potential bumper crop for 2025. The association ran a domestic marketing campaign over the summer and attended a trade show in Hong Kong in September. A spring meeting is planned for strategic planning and possibly redefining BCCA's role.
- Nikki reflected on insights from recent travels to England and Italy, noting that climate change is impacting all commodities. Collaboration across sectors is becoming essential. She emphasized the importance of resilience and moving forward together and said that she has observed more positivity in the local wine industry than she anticipated despite challenges.
- Tyrion reported that BCGA has been prioritizing education and fostering community after a tough season, focusing on helping growers maximize benefits from production insurance and AgriStability by ensuring they are informed and enrolled.
- Ryan shared his experience in Ottawa at the CPMA Fall Harvest Management Committee and at a parliamentary question period, highlighting the need for grower input in policymaking. He emphasized the importance of accurate data collection for CFP and noted that data will be key to the future of the produce supply chain.
- Gord noted that CFP, like others, took on extra volume due to the BCTF closure. Retailers are stepping in to move BC apples, focusing on quality and understanding industry challenges. Despite smaller sizes in some varieties, overall quality and colour are strong, with packers collaborating effectively post-closure.
- Sukhpaul emphasized that BRM programs are failing to support growers in the current crisis. With only a 20% crop, growers face increased costs and reduced returns. He stressed the need for continued government advocacy for meaningful changes to sustain agriculture.
- Madeleine echoed concerns about BRM programs, noting that multi-year weather impacts drastically reduce coverage. With grapes, insurance tied to a 5-year average significantly limits support after consecutive bad years.
- Walt highlighted crop insurance issues stemming from frozen, splitting trees in 2023. He had to remove 12 acres of apples and lost some of his grape crop. He emphasized the critical importance of keeping detailed records for insurance claims.
- Melissa reported that BCFGA supported emergency efforts during the BCTF closure. They are also assisting former BCTF growers to explore a smaller co-op model, and planning to rebuild membership, as 2/3 of BCFGA members were also members of BCTF. They are also working with MAF to update the production guide. BCFGA's current lobbying efforts focus on a climate relief fund and addressing differences in crop aid compared to the U.S. They've asked IAF to lead Apple Marketing Commission work, with a vote expected in March. In a recent trip to Ottawa, BCFGA learned about the opportunity to access parliamentary resources to analyze issues like U.S. fruit dumping.
 - Beth added that a similar issue exists for cherries, with truckloads being sent on consignment to retailers like Walmart.

- Adrian noted that Lana Popham is now Minister, with Michelle Koski as Deputy Minister. He expressed excitement about meetings resuming at the research station. The Climate Resiliency Program website launches in December, with applications opening in January. MAF partnered with BCFGA to support apple growers after the BCTF closure, but uptake for the food safety program was low and has been left to packers. The provincial data strategy project has dropped from 11 participating packers to 3. He also warned of a new avian flu outbreak and offered to share more information if needed.
 - Melissa asked if the ADM is still working on the BRM project in her new role. Adrian explained the project focuses on improving communication and helping growers understand what BRM programs can and cannot do. Sukhpaul highlighted the need for a clear "how-to" guide for BRM programs.
 - Walt noted that unclear reporting requirements often result in growers learning through denied claims. He stressed the lack of communication, and the challenges faced by farmers with limited language or literacy skills, which leaves them at a disadvantage.

5. REGULAR BUSINESS

5.1 CCLSP COMMITTEES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Shelby Austen provided an update on CCLSP committees and communications.

The Extension Committee met on November 14 with 17 attendees, including three new members, to share updates and plan the 2025 Extension Conference, scheduled for February 26-28. Key ideas include a grower panel, research updates, and workshops on peer-to-peer learning in agriculture. Preparations for the research briefs project, in collaboration with ACARN, BC Food Web, and BCWGC, are also underway. The Domestic Labour Committee met on November 22 to discuss updates on BC Fruit Works and the Labour Supply Research Project. The Innovation and Technology Committee met on November 20 with discussions focused on project ideas related to cold mitigation, bioplastics, data strategy, and noise control technologies.

She also highlighted website updates, including new "Project Spotlights" for CCLSP initiatives, and noted the success of the Lake Country bus tour on November 6, with further details to be shared later in the agenda.

5.2 STABILIZATION FUND: FINANCIAL UPDATE

Kellie Garcia provided a financial update on the Stabilization Fund, highlighting current commitments and the remaining balance of \$591,333. She proposed reallocating the \$43,413 designated for Steering Committee Farmer Remuneration to general projects, as the CCLSP budget can cover this remuneration. Additionally, \$4,481 left over from the 2024 Extension Practitioners Conference could also be moved back to general projects, which would bring the remaining balance to \$639,222.

Kellie requested direction from the Advisory Council on whether to allocate portions of the remaining funds to specific categories, such as extension, innovation & technology, or domestic labour, or to leave them flexible for worthwhile projects as they arise.

Melissa emphasized the importance of prioritizing the strongest projects over using predefined categories. Madeleine agreed, stressing the need for clear priorities to demonstrate the success of a cross-commodity approach. Beth noted that focusing on priorities ensures opportunities are addressed, whereas fixed categories may limit flexibility.

Kellie stated that priorities are guided by this group, the committees, extension conference roadmaps, TFISP recommendations, and CCLSP strategic and work plans.

The discussion focused on shifting priorities, particularly after recent challenging years. Sukhpaul highlighted the need for further investigation into BRM programs and an industry wide data strategy, suggesting that updates and

data collection are necessary to improve the sustainability of the sector. However, due to the broad scope, it has not yet been formalized as a project. Madeleine cautioned against using provincial funds to lobby the government, advocating instead for a collaborative approach with professional, actionable solutions given the urgency.

Melissa agreed on the importance of addressing BRM but questioned whether CCLSP is the right platform, suggesting it may be more appropriate for the interior horticulture sector. She noted that individual commodity meetings aren't sufficient, and a collective effort might be needed.

Moved by: Madeleine van Roechoudt

Seconded by: Melissa Tesche

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves reallocating industry remuneration funding in the amount of \$43,413 to future projects, with industry remuneration to be covered by the existing CCLSP budget. And that the Advisory Council also approves reallocating the unspent budget from IAF-202403-09984 of \$4,481 to future projects."

5.3 STABILIZATION FUND: CURRENT PROJECTS

a) CROSS-COMMODITY LEADERSHIP SUPPORT PROJECT

Kellie provided an update on the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project (CCLSP). The team is exploring approximately 10 new project ideas, some of which will be reviewed at the January Advisory Council meeting. Budget updates indicate steady progress, with significant funds still available for allocation. Membership updates include welcoming Karen Yeung from BCWGC as the new representative while efforts continue to secure additional members from the BCFGA and BCGA, including grower representatives at large.

b) BC ACCESS TO PLANT MATERIAL (BCFGA)

Moved by: Sukhpaul Bal

Seconded by: Madeleine van Roechoudt

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC Access to Plant Material Project Progress Report submitted by the BC Fruit Growers' Association and recommends the first payment of \$14,017."

CARRIED

c) BC FRUIT WORKS

Shamore presented her report in detail. Key highlights from the BC Fruit Works update include the completion of most deliverables, such as the website, HR materials, marketing campaigns, job matching, and industry engagement. Remaining work focuses on producer education and a long-term strategy. The project timeline has been extended to March 31, 2025, to use all budget allocated to the project. To address low participation and engagement challenges, the Project Lead integrated survey questions into the broader labour research study to gather feedback and inform recommendations. She is also collaborating with industry partners and plans to work with the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council to develop an eLearning module for tree fruits and wine grapes, addressing a critical resource gap.

- Sukhpaul acknowledged the challenges of the project due to poor crops and complimented Shamore's efforts. He suggested increasing participation by having each commodity group distribute a one-pager highlighting the benefits of BC Fruit Works. Kellie agreed, emphasizing the need to move away from siloed approaches to one under the industry associations, noting the uphill nature of the work over the past three years.
- Tyrion stated that the industry seems to be prioritizing Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) over domestic labour, which might not be a sustainable approach. The Council noted the importance of domestic labour for small scale farms who cannot rely on TFW. Kate suggested that targeted communication is needed to

identify and engage growers best suited for domestic labour. She emphasized creating a grower profile to better match the program with those who could benefit most.

- Sukhpaul added that while domestic labour remains limited, efforts should focus on demonstrating the industry's commitment to improving conditions and pushing back against negative narratives. He highlighted that growers who invest in worker well-being tend to succeed. Madeleine supported this, stressing the importance of marketing farm work positively to enhance perceptions, which also benefits TFW programs.
- Shamore concluded that while BCFW has value, job matching may not be a good focus. She recommended positioning the industry to attract top talent and focusing on broader strategies to improve engagement.

d) GLOBAL CLUB ACCESS FOR BC GROWERS

Madeleine provided an update on the project, which is behind schedule but moving forward. Tools have been put in place to setup a legal entity and a grower return model has been developed. A grower checklist is also under development. The project team is currently completing a go/no go on 2025 budding.

e) LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURE TOUR

Kellie provided an update on the November 6, 2024, "Agriculture in Action: Bridging Policy & Practice" bus tour in Lake Country, which brought together planners and tree fruit and wine grape producers to discuss regulatory challenges. Visits to four sites showcased issues related to worker housing, water use and wastewater discharge, waste management, and farm diversification with participants highlighting the need for simplified regulatory processes, balanced dialogue between staff and farmers, and improved public education. The Oliver tour was canceled due to low engagement, and the remaining budget will be allocated to a spring tour. Kellie requested the Advisory Council's endorsement for an interim payment to cover costs from the Lake Country tour.

- Madeleine emphasized the importance of selecting sites that are directly relevant to the work of planning staff and noted the absence of engineers, who could provide valuable input.
- Michelle highlighted that the tone of the tour occasionally became disrespectful and suggested fostering a more balanced and collaborative dialogue in future events.
- Melissa proposed using the insights from the tour as a foundation for another local government-focused project. Kellie agreed, acknowledging lessons learned and committing to building on them for future initiatives.

Moved by: Beth Cavers

Seconded by: Madeleine van Roechoudt

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the project expense report for the Local Government and Agriculture Tours submitted by the Okanagan Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends the interim payment of \$6,911."

CARRIED

f) BC DAS OPERATIONS

No discussion.

g) BC DAS EXPANSION TO WINE GRAPES

No discussion.

h) EXTENSION CONFERENCE

This update was covered under agenda item 5.1.

i) RESEARCH BRIEFS

This update was covered under agenda item 5.1.

5.4 STABILIZATION FUND: NEW APPLICATIONS

No new applications.

5.5 DISCUSSION OF OTHER CROSS-COMMODITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 LABOUR SUPPLY RESEARCH PROJECT

The Domestic Labour Supply Research Project, conducted in collaboration with KPU's Institute for Sustainable Food Systems, explores challenges in domestic labour for the Okanagan tree fruit and wine grape sectors. As of mid-November, the team has completed a literature review, analysed census data, and conducted most grower and worker interviews, focusing on recruitment, retention, housing, and wages. Final interviews will wrap up in December, with analysis and reporting scheduled for winter and spring 2025. Key themes include labour reliability, competition from other sectors, and worker housing issues, with policy recommendations to follow.

6.2 PROPOSED 2025 MEETING DATES

In 2025, the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council will meet on January 28, April 24, June 24, November 27.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The next Cross-Commodity Advisory Council meeting will be held on January 28, 2024, from 9 am to 12 pm.

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council January 15, 2024

From: Shelby Austen, CCLSP Admin. & Comms. Manager

Subject: Update on CCLSP Committees and Communications

Advisory Council Membership:

We would like to extend a warm welcome to BCGA's new representative, Dapinder Gill. We are still working to secure a representative from the BC Fruit Growers' Association. The Advisory Council could also benefit from adding "grower members at large."

Committees:

Innovation & Technology

The committee met on January 14 with 13 people attending. We focused on updates about current work and decided on priorities for 2025. We heard from consultants about the BC DAS operations and the expansion to include winegrapes. The group chose two main priorities for 2025: cold mitigation sprays and information/data sharing. More details about cold mitigation sprays will be shared at the Southern Interior Horticulture Show. CCLSP staff are also working with the BCFGa and BCWGC to scope out a data-sharing project.

Domestic Labour

The committee met on January 17, with 7 people present. The meeting centred on roundtable discussions and updates for BC Fruits and the Labour Research Project. The committee expects moderate to high labour needs for 2025. Results and recommendations from BC Fruit Works and the Labour Research Project will guide the committee's priorities for the upcoming year.

Extension

The committee is set to meet on January 21, and I will give a verbal update at the Advisory Council meeting.

Communications:

We are currently working on the 2024 annual report, partnering with Wayside Printing for graphic design. The report will highlight key accomplishments, including:

- **Completion of Goal 1:** Successfully transitioning TFISP efforts from government to industry.
- **Collaboration Highlights:** Hosting 19 regular meetings in 2024, involving 53 members from 27 organizations.
- **Leadership in Initiatives:** Leading eight collaborative initiatives with 206 participants and partnerships across 47 organizations.
- **Educational Impact:** Delivering five educational opportunities led by CCLSP.
- **Event Support:** Adding 93 industry events to the common calendar by year-end.
- **Grant Administration:** Processing nine project applications from CCLSP committees, administering \$904,606 in grants, and directing \$33,000 to other industry groups.

Other key communications work includes finalizing the summary report from the November agriculture tour and ongoing planning for the 2025 extension conference and spring agriculture tour (updates under agenda item 5.3).

As the meeting season begins, we're actively engaging with our partners and collaborators at events such as:

- BC ACARN's Lab to Land Workshop (January)
- BC Agri-Food Industry Gala (January)
- BCFGA and BCCA AGMs (February)
- Southern Interior Horticulture Show (February)
- BC ACARN's Seeding Success Communications Workshop (February)

In the coming year, we aim to further enhance communications and broaden our reach through the following priorities:

- **Boost Media Presence:** Draft and publish more articles for association memberships, increase news releases, and grow overall media visibility.
- **Engage Local Governments:** Deliver more presentations to regional boards and agricultural advisory committees to foster stronger connections.
- **Host Relevant Events:** Collaborate with CCLSP partners and committees to organize field days, webinars, and workshops, ensuring the industry has access to needed resources.

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
January 28, 2025
Agenda No. 5.2

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

January 17, 2025

From: Kellie Garcia, Project Director

Subject: Financial Update on Stabilization Fund

The following table provides the current commitments and balance of the stabilization fund.

TFISP Balance as at January 2025				
Balance provided by IAF on Aug 1, 2024 (does not include marketing council funds)				\$ 2,562,156
Project Commitments				
Project Number	Project Title	Allocated	Paid	O/S
IAF-202403-09994 - OKSIR (formerly TFC030)	Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project	\$ 855,658	\$ 374,730	(480,928)
IAF-202403-09993 - OKSIR	Global Club Access for BC Growers	\$ 48,000	\$ 40,000	(8,000)
IAF-202403-09988 - OKSIR	Domestic Labour - BC Fruit Works 2024	\$ 162,540	\$ 140,000	(22,540)
IAF-202403-09984 - OKSIR	2024 Extension Practitioners Conference	\$ 32,269	\$ 32,269	(0)
IAF-202507-12969 - BCFGGA	BC Access to Plant Material	\$ 33,000	\$ 14,642	(18,358)
IAF-202509-13793 - OKSIR	BC DAS Operations	\$ 300,545	\$ 200,000	(100,545)
IAF-202509-13792 - OKSIR	2025 Extension Practitioners Conference	\$ 35,385	\$ -	(35,385)
IAF-202509-13791 - OKSIR	Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,595	\$ 6,407	(8,188)
IAF-202509-13794 - OKSIR	BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ 46,200	(69,300)
IAF-202509-13795 - OKSIR	Research Briefs & Videos	\$ 143,850	\$ -	(143,850)
Other Commitments				
Steering Committee Farmer Remuneration		\$ 56,587	\$ 56,587	(0)
Administration Fees				
IAF Admin Fees (estimated)		\$ 125,000	-	(125,000)
Total commitments		\$ 1,922,929	\$ 910,835	\$(1,012,094)
Funds Remaining (not contracted)				\$ 639,227

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
January 28, 2025
Agenda No. 5.3

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

January 17, 2025

From: Kellie Garcia, Project Director

Subject: Update on Cross-Commodity Projects

CCLSP staff and partners are working on nine cross-commodity projects funded through the stabilization program and one project funded through the workforce analysis and planning program (both funding programs are administered by IAF).

Our current projects are:

- Cross-Commodity Leadership Support
- BC Access to Plant Material
- BC Fruit Works
- Labour Supply Research
- Global Club Access for BC Growers
- Local Government & Agriculture Tours
- BC DAS Operations
- BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes
- Extension Conference 2025
- Research Briefs

Budget and progress updates for all projects are included below.

Report on Budgets

CCLSP General Operating Expenses

	2024 Expenses						
	2024 Projected Budget	Q1 (Jan to Mar)	Q2 (Apr to Jun)	Q3 (Jul to Sep)	Q4 (Oct to Dec)	To Date	Budget Remaining
Communications	\$ 4,500	\$ 175	\$ 1,391	\$ 52	\$ -	\$ 1,618	\$ 2,882
Meetings & Travel	\$ 7,500	\$ 1,881	\$ 1,458	\$ 212	\$ 3,915	\$ 7,466	\$ 34
Employee Expenses	\$ 207,550	\$ 46,014	\$ 64,166	\$ 38,220	\$ 51,059	\$ 199,459	\$ 8,091
Supplies, Software, Subscriptions	\$ 5,500	\$ 245	\$ 724	\$ 461	\$ 155	\$ 1,585	\$ 3,915
Rent	\$ 2,600	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,959	\$ 2,959	-\$ 359
Contract Services	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000
Contract Admin (SIR 8.5 %)	\$ 20,200	\$ 4,107	\$ 5,758	\$ 3,310	\$ 4,937	\$ 18,113	\$ 2,088
TOTAL	\$ 257,850	\$ 52,422	\$ 73,498	\$ 42,255	\$ 63,026	\$ 231,201	\$ 26,649

Current Administered Projects

	Budget	2024 Expenses					To Date	Budget Remaining
		Q1 (Jan to Mar)	Q2 (Apr to Jun)	Q3 (Jul to Sep)	Q4 (Oct to Dec)			
Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,595	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,407		\$ 6,407	\$ 8,188
BC DAS Operations	\$ 300,545	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18		\$ 18	\$ 300,527
BC DAS to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 115,500
BC Fruit Works	\$ 162,540	\$ 3,620	\$ 44,433	\$ 27,707	\$ 29,867		\$ 105,627	\$ 56,913
2025 Extension Conference	\$ 35,385	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000	\$ 34,385
Labour Supply Research	\$ 115,000	\$ -	\$ 25,463	\$ 38,800	\$ 1,575		\$ 65,838	\$ 49,162
Global Club Variety Access	\$ 48,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17,143	\$ -		\$ 17,143	\$ 30,857
Research Briefs	\$ 143,850	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 143,850
TOTAL	\$ 935,415	\$ 3,620	\$ 69,896	\$ 83,650	\$ 38,867		\$ 196,033	\$ 739,382

Note: The BC Access to Plant Material Project is administered by the BCFGA and not included in the table above.

Total Cross-Commodity Funding (includes current and completed projects)

	Total Revenue Expected	Received to Date	Remaining
CCLSP	\$ 855,658	\$ 374,730	\$ 480,928
Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,595	\$ 6,407	\$ 8,188
BC DAS	\$ 300,545	\$ 200,000	\$ 100,545
BC DAS to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ 46,200	\$ 69,300
BC Fruit Works	\$ 162,540	\$ 140,000	\$ 22,540
Extension Conference (2024)	\$ 36,750	\$ 32,269	\$ 4,481
Extension Conference (2025)	\$ 35,385	\$ -	\$ 35,385
Labour Supply Research	\$ 115,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 50,000
Global Club Variety Access	\$ 48,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 8,000
Research Briefs	\$ 143,850	\$ -	\$ 143,850
TOTAL	\$ 1,827,823	\$ 904,606	\$ 923,217

Report on Progress

Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

Priorities for the CCLSP are guided by our Strategic Plan, available [here](#) and provided as an attachment to your agenda package. The Strategic Plan was prepared by CCLSP staff and members of the Partners Table. It contains five broad goals and 20 performance indicators that we will report on annually. Our first annual report is under development and will be available soon.

CCLSP staff also prepare quarterly progress reports to keep things on track and promote transparency of our work and how the stabilization funding is being spent. Progress reports for 2024 Q1, Q2, and Q3 are available [here](#).

BC Access to Plant Material

This project is administered and managed by the BCFGA. The advisory council received a thorough progress report for the project at their November meeting so the update this month is brief.

The BC Nursery Stock Access Committee met in November to further discuss project implementation. Traps and lures have been received and a trapping plan is being developed. It is anticipated that traps will be installed between May and August 2025, as appropriate. Grower education will continue at the Southern Interior Hort Show (SIHS), Tree Fruit Production Guide meetings, and other events to be identified. One of the participating WA nurseries will be attending the SIHS. Import permit revisions are also being addressed and the first shipment of Washington trees under the pilot will be received soon. The project team also continues to watch for the updated Oriental Fruit Moth directive from CFIA.

BC Fruit Works

As noted at the November meeting, the deadline for BC Fruit Works has been extended to March 31, 2025, to give us more time to work on deliverables 6 Producer Education and Engagement and 8 Developing a Long-term Strategy for BC Fruit Works.

Producer Education and Engagement

Over the last few months, we collaborated with T2 Marketing to produce a series of mini videos that highlight various aspects of working in the tree fruit and wine grape industry. However, due to some production delays, the initial drafts contained outdated information, which was also flagged by some advisory committee partners.

To address this, we conducted a thorough review and updated the scripts to ensure they are timeless by removing specific details about job matching and similar topics. Now, these videos can serve as evergreen content, promoting the industry without becoming outdated.

The outcome will be three videos focusing on:

1. Reasons to consider working in the industry.
2. Resources and supports available through BC Fruit Works.
3. The variety of roles within the industry.

You can find the updated scripts [here](#).

T2 Marketing is editing the first video based on the feedback we provided. Once it's ready, we'll share it with the team for review.

We are also in discussions with the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) about a potential collaboration on labor initiatives. We met and shared our vision for developing a dedicated tree fruits and wine grapes module for CAHRC's "Welcome to Canadian Agriculture" eLearning course, as there isn't one currently for our sector. There have been delays in receiving the formal proposal from CAHRC. Once we have received the proposal, we'll decide how to proceed and keep everyone updated.

Long-term Strategy for BC Fruit Works

Given the challenges our industry is facing and the lower participation in BC Fruit Works this season, we've decided to merge our project evaluation questions into the labour research interviews instead of doing a separate survey. Combining our recruitment efforts allowed for feedback from a wider range of people, even those who didn't take part in BC Fruit Works. The interviews wrapped up in December, and the KPU team has already started analyzing the data.

Our Project Lead has also been reviewing feedback from participants over the past two years of the BC Fruit Works pilot. The goal is to identify and consider repeated feedback in the long-term strategy recommendations. This process is ongoing.

We are also in the process of moving the BC Fruit Works website from its US hosting company. This switch will reduce costs, improve access to technical support, and give content management capabilities to the project team. The Project Lead interviewed seven local companies and evaluated them based on price, service offerings, customer service, and reviews before choosing Twirling Umbrellas. This is the company that hosts our CCLSP website so we can share the same hosting plan and pay one annual fee.

Labour Supply Research Project

Data collection for the project is complete. The research team completed 34 interviews – 22 producers and 12 workers. Most of the producers (18) work in the south Okanagan. Of the 12 workers interviewed, 6 live in the Okanagan year-round while the other half stated they travel back and forth seasonally, with 4 going back to Quebec for the winter.

Analysis of the interview data is ongoing. The team is using NVivo qualitative data analysis software to examine qualitative and quantitative patterns related to labour issues in the industry. After uploading and de-identifying interview transcripts, they coded the interviews to categorize responses and identify themes. Using NVivo's tools, they are uncovering common factors in various farm operations that contribute to successful or unsuccessful labour experiences for both producers and workers in the industry. This allows the team to identify trends and make recommendations.

The research team also reviewed literature and Statistics Canada datasets related to workforce trends, production statistics, and economic factors shaping the industry. The topics reviewed included temporary foreign workers, production volumes, farm gate values, farm operator characteristics, labour force statistics, farm operating revenues and expenses, and job vacancy. A custom dataset related to paid labour on fruit farms by farm size for 2016 and 2021 was also obtained.

To date, the team has focused their analysis on answering these key questions:

- What motivates workers to enter and/or remain in the industry?
- What would make the work more desirable to increase recruitment and retention?
- What farm/business practices contribute to worker retention?
- What industry and policy recommendations were made by growers and workers that would contribute to a more stable domestic labour force?

Many more possible areas of inquiry are possible and will be pursued as the analysis progresses. Results from the research are expected in June 2025.

Global Club Access for BC Growers

This project is helping BC growers build a process that can be followed to gain access to global Club apple varieties, using Snowflake™ as a test case. Deliverables include information and a checklist to guide the set up a legal entity, checklists to guide grower, packing, and marketing elements and requirements, a return on investment (ROI) model, and engagement with Algoma Orchards and interested BC growers.

In most circumstances, a global Club Variety Manager licenses one exclusive Packer-Marketer in a production territory. The Packer-Marketer provides the Club Variety Manager with a one-stop-shop for important Club activities, like quality standards, labeling with the Club trademark, royalties and fees from Club fruit revenues, and tracking of Club fruit pack-outs and sales performance.

For the past 35 years, while global Clubs have exploded, BC has had open access to Ambrosia apples, a global Club variety, and several global Club cherry varieties, without having to participate in any of the activities and requirements mentioned above. The BC industry has shown little interest in licensing additional Club varieties and as a result are not currently set up to meet the needs of global Club Variety Manager. To access these varieties, BC growers must execute an “end-around” by providing a one-stop-shop that Club Variety Managers would otherwise access through a Packer-Marketer. A small group of BC apple growers is working with Sean Beirnes of Interstem Solutions Inc. to investigate and design a process for accessing global Club varieties. They are testing the process with the Snowflake™ variety, which was bred at the Summerland Research Station, but exclusive Canadian marketing rights belong to Algoma Orchards in Ontario.

The project has been ongoing since January 2024 and should wrap up by the end of February 2025. The deliverables will be useful to all growers interested in accessing global Club varieties (not just those participating in the pilot) and will be shared as soon as possible after they are complete.

Local Government & Agriculture Tours

CCLSP hosted the successful *Agriculture in Action: Bridging Policy & Practice* bus tour in Lake Country on November 6, connecting planning staff with growers to showcase their operations and talk about challenges in navigating regulations. The final report for the tour is available [here](#) and was provided as an attachment to your agenda package.

We will be hosting our second tour on **April 2, 2025**, in the Penticton area. Elected officials from across the valley and local government staff from the south Okanagan will be invited to attend. We will also invite Ministry of Agriculture and Foods and Agriculture Land Commission staff to join us. Stay tuned for more details.

BC DAS Operations

Molly Thurston, of Pearl Agricultural Consulting, is continuing as our horticultural consultant for BC DAS and is already preparing for the 2025 season. January tasks include updating handouts and resources, connecting with the programmer at Washington State University, preparing a grower engagement strategy, and recruiting and onboarding new users. Several industry events are coming up in February and Molly will be representing and promoting BC DAS at as many as possible.

The BC DAS steering committee will meet on February 3. The committee includes reps from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, BCWGC, BCFGA, and Peak HydroMet Solutions. We've also added a few new wine grape industry specialists this year to enhance the cross-commodity perspective.

BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes

In December 2024, the CCLSP hired Galen Barnhardt from Barn to Bottle Consulting to complete Phase 1 of the BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes project. His task is to determine what would be required to expand BC DAS to wine grapes and whether it is feasible and beneficial to carry out the project.

A big part of that is talking with people in the industry. Galen is expecting to interview around 30 people for the project. He has interviewed eight so far, has another four booked, and has extended invites to 10 more. Interviewees include WSU and AAFC staff/researchers, Ministry of Ag representatives, industry association leads, and grape growers.

The interviews and additional research have so far revealed five possible barriers to the expansion of DAS to include wine grapes. The barriers are (1) funding, (2) the availability of appropriate models, (3) industry uptake and available 'champions' for beta testing, (4) support from local academia, and (5) sufficiently updated and relevant resource materials for DAS to link to. More information is included below.

1. Funding has no guarantees, but the expansion of the program is not expected to generate significant additional costs over the short-term, in particular, the licensing agreement with WSU will be unaffected. The Wine Grape Industry Task Force also has access to additional funds over the next two years. With data availability/sharing as one of the 5 working groups of WGITF, there may be an opportunity for some funding through the task force.
2. Finding appropriate models remains a challenge as, so far, no ready-made models that have been validated for the BC climate have presented themselves. However, he has scheduled additional interviews with various academics, which should help to determine what stage of development various models are at. WSU has also recently begun to incorporate two grape-specific models to their DAS system. One model is a predictive model for bloom for 10 different grape varieties, while another is a nematode model. Unfortunately, the nematode model requires soil temperature sensors, which BC DAS stations do not have.
3. There has been enthusiastic support for DAS from those growers he has talked to so far, though more research is needed to see who might be willing to volunteer time and resources to beta testing.
4. Local academia appear to support the idea, though additional interviews are still upcoming. Dr. Urbez-Torres noted that modelling has not been a priority of his to date but could be if the DAS system were opened to grapes.
5. DAS will benefit from the updated Best Practices Guide for BC Grapegrowers that was recently soft launched on the BCWGC website. This updated BPG will incorporate Ministry of Ag spray recommendations. This is critical as the previous BPG was last completed in 2010 and much of the resource information was outdated.

Extension Conference 2025

The 2025 Extension Conference, scheduled for February 27–28 in Penticton, will focus on professional development and strengthening collaboration across commodities. Participants will revisit last year's extension roadmaps, reflect on the successes, challenges, and progress of 2024, and develop a cross-commodity roadmap to guide meaningful extension work in 2025.

The program will feature a leadership workshop on conflict resolution led by Pauline Perrault of Jump Outta Bed Inc., and a keynote with UBC's Hannah Wittman and Jessica Chiartas, exploring farmer-to-farmer movements and motivations in the context of climate change.

We are working with the Extension Committee to finalize the agenda and ensure practitioners leave with the tools they need to address the top challenges facing tree fruits and wine grapes.

Research Briefs

In partnership with ACARN and BC Food Web, the CCLSP will be preparing 12 briefs and 4 videos summarizing regional peer-reviewed research tailored to the needs of tree fruit and wine grape growers. The project is launching in April 2025 and an update will be provided at our meeting that month.

MEMORANDUM

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

January 17, 2025

From: Kellie Garcia, Project Director

Subject: Project Development and Funding Applications

Project development continues to be an important part of our cross-commodity work. CCLSP staff have been collaborating with our Partners Table and committee members to scope out several ideas for 2025/26. I am sharing three project ideas that would benefit from advisory council feedback and discussion.

Cross-Commodity Data Collection, Sharing, and Use (Industry Data Strategy)

The Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan identified the need for accurate comprehensive data to drive industry planning and resource initiatives. Data are needed to inform operational and business decisions on the farm, to ensure the fair and accurate administration of funding, and to develop, track, assess, and demonstrate the effectiveness of government programs and policies.

We are struggling with several issues as an industry:

- Multiple organizations collect data often using different approaches and definitions.
- Different sources of data, and data siloes, are preventing integration and use across the industry.
- Much of the data collected by government agencies, research institutions, and other organizations are not easily accessible to farmers.
- A lack of coordination or centralization is resulting in redundant efforts across organizations.
- There are varying degrees of sophistication, as well as adoption rates, in data use across the industry.

Ideally, we would have a data-driven industry where systems, processes, and people are working together to use data efficiently and effectively. To do this, we must have clearly stated goals and a holistic and universal approach to collecting and deploying data.

This project will help articulate our goals by identifying industry's key questions and priorities, creating an inventory of what agricultural data are currently available, deciding how the data can be used to answer our questions, assembling the data in a central repository, and creating outputs that are useful to industry.

The first phase of the project would include interviews and a literature review to inform a data needs and inventory report. Interviewees would be growers, government and academic researchers and data managers, extension practitioners, and other individuals with expertise in agricultural data. The aim of the interviews would be to define industry data needs, identify existing data opportunities, highlight data gaps, and reveal risks and challenges related to data collection, management, and sharing. This early collaboration would help ensure our priorities are well-informed and achievable and create buy-in for the process. Studies, reports, websites, and other information related to agricultural data sharing in other regions would also be reviewed.

The data needs and inventory report would summarize the interviews, catalogue the data sets available, and provide recommendations for the architecture, infrastructure, and analytics tools required to meet industry needs.

Once we have the report, we can shift into creating the architecture and infrastructure needed for the datasets, assembling the data, and preparing spatial and statistical outputs that meet industry needs. A data manager/GIS specialist would be hired and shared across the commodities to do this work.

Business Risk Management Programs

At the November advisory council meeting, we heard about the challenges members are facing with Business Risk Management programs delivered by the province. I am not sure that this table is the most appropriate place to work on a project related to BRM given that the CCLSP is funded by the provincial government and is not permitted to lobby. But it is worthwhile to continue the conversation here for now to see if we can scope a project that would fit within our mandate.

I have heard that the BC Government has been working to improve their client communications for AgriStability and Crop Insurance as well as general BRM communication/marketing material for quite some time. In fall 2024, Zero Gravity Marketing was hired to engage ministry staff and industry representatives to better understand how and where farmers get BRM program information, explore the perceived importance of BRM programs, and identify key motivating factors to inform communication strategies. Industry associations were invited to participate. Did any of the associations on the advisory council provide feedback? And has anyone seen a report from the province about what they learned and how they will respond?

Local Government Engagement

At the Lake Country agriculture tour, it was proposed that CCLSP partner with regional districts to organize semi-annual facilitated discussions between local governments and farmers to enhance communication and collaboration and build relationships and trust. It was also suggested that CCLSP provide presentations to councils and regional districts to keep elected officials informed about agricultural challenges and opportunities. We would collaborate with our partner organizations to develop content for these presentations, of course.

We think these ideas are worth pursuing and will do so once the April agriculture tour is complete. The costs will be minimal and can be covered under our current CCLSP budget to start.