

# INNOVATION & EXTENSION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **Innovation & Extension Committee** meeting held via MS Teams on November 4, 2025.

---

## **Members Present:**

Barbara Hall  
Chris Zabek  
Evan Esch (CO-CHAIR)  
Felix Egerer  
Gail Nelson  
Galen Barnhardt  
Gayle Krahn  
Hank Markgraf  
Isabella Rivero  
Jesse MacDonald  
Karen Yeung  
Kathy Malone  
Kellie Garcia (CO-CHAIR)  
Lisa Wambold  
Love-Ese Chile  
Matt Walz  
Naomi Delury  
Nick Ibuki  
Ruth King  
Sarah O'Brien  
Shelby Austen  
Sukhpaul Bal

UBC Okanagan  
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food  
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program  
Wine Island Growers Association  
BC Fruit Growers' Association  
Barn to Bottle Consulting  
Terralink Horticulture, BC Cherry Association  
Syngenta Canada Inc.  
BC Wine Grape Council, BC Grapegrowers' Association  
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada  
BC Wine Grape Council  
BC Wine Grape Council  
Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project  
Terralink Horticulture  
BC Agricultural Climate Action Research Network  
Terralink Horticulture  
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada  
Summerland Varieties Corporation  
UBC Okanagan  
Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program  
Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project  
BC Cherry Association

## **Regrets:**

Beth Cavers  
Kate Durisek  
Lindsay Hainstock  
Molly Thurston  
Sera Lean  
Steve Brown

BC Cherry Association  
BC Wine Grape Council  
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food  
Pearl Agricultural Consulting  
Evergro – Nutrien Ag Solutions  
Independent Grower

## **1. WELCOMING REMARKS**

Kellie provided an update on the decision to merge the CCLSP Extension and Innovation & Technology committees. The merger aims to reduce duplication of effort, minimize meeting fatigue, and improve alignment across industry initiatives.

## **2. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

No action items.

## **3. MEMBER ROUND TABLE UPDATES**

- Evan reported that the SIR field season is wrapping up, though SIR staff continue to hold on-farm meetings with growers and plan activities for the upcoming growing season. They are also preparing extension materials for the Southern Interior Horticulture Show.
- Matt said the season is also winding down, and Terralink is currently working on forecasting customer needs for next season.
- Naomi updated the group on the upcoming, invitation only Apple Industry Roundtable. The goal is to identify gaps and potential solutions to reduce food loss. She also highlighted a recent [blog post](#) on determining optimal cherry harvest timing to preserve flavour for export markets.
- Lisa shared that it was an extremely busy season and that Terralink added a new Penticton location to meet demand. Her current work includes inventory counts, soil sampling, and SAP/tissue analysis with growers. She held multiple grower meetings focused on timing of nutrient applications during the season. Moving forward, she plans to promote BCDAS in the Similkameen region and noted she will take part in beta testing the expansion to wine grapes.
- Barbara said her rootstock project is progressing well; the imported rootstocks are growing successfully, and she is now focusing on climate data to support the program.
- Love-Ese reported that ACARN recently wrapped up the Cultivating Resilience Summit on advancing climate-smart agri-food systems. She also attended [the International Conference of Canadian Agri-food and Rural Advisory, Extension, and Education](#) at the University of Guelph, where discussions centred on AI in extension and global extension challenges. She also highlighted Farm Credit Canada's new generative AI tool, [Root](#), designed for Canadian agriculture. Lastly, ACARN is focused on the upcoming BC Living Labs workshop at the end of November.
- Sukhpaul said he was pleased to have a crop this year, though its large size presented new challenges.
- Gayle shared that BCCA has an upcoming Research and Extension Committee meeting and several SCAP projects in progress, with updates to be presented at the AGM in March. She emphasized the need to continue to try to engage growers in field days and research sessions next year.
- Chris said the team is finalizing details for the Southern Interior Horticulture Show. The Enhanced Replant Program was implemented in stages this year. He added that Stream 1 of the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program will open later this month, and updates will follow. The Ministry is also launching a Table Grapes Opportunity Assessment and an RFP on Agrivoltaics in a cooperating vineyard.
- Nick reported that SVC is progressing through cherry data and apple sampling.
- Hank said he is currently focused on sales forecasting for upcoming seasons and noted interesting findings when comparing harvest maturity and picking times. He suggested keeping this topic in mind for future extension work.
- Karen highlighted that the Wine Grape Industry Task Force (WGITF) is forming new working groups and reported a strong grape crop this season. However, she raised marketing concerns about grapes left unharvested.
- Felix said he is also focused on WGITF subcommittee work and is collaborating with the Cowichan Agricultural Society and BC Agriculture Council on initiatives related to water and land access.
- Ruth shared that most of her recent time has been spent on grant writing and organizing Grape Day with AAFC on November 26, which will be held at the UBC Okanagan campus. She is also

developing an endowed chair proposal for a Sustainable Viticulture Research position to strengthen extension capacity.

- Kathy said her current focus is preparing research priorities for the next SCAP funding cycle, in coordination with the WGITF. She also established an informal grower group on the Naramata Bench, meeting a few times a year since the freeze to share experiences. She noted the group has been valuable for peer learning and could help inform committee discussions.
- Jesse said his recent work has centred on commodity days. Two cherry events were planned this summer - one was well attended and the other was cancelled due to low registration - and a grape commodity day is planned at UBCO later this month. He's also working with partners on a future apple commodity day. In addition, he is serving on the Research and Innovation Working Group for the Federal Horticulture Table, where knowledge transfer and translation has been a key focus.
- Isabella said she has been reviewing the performance of communications materials to ensure information is delivered at the right time and in the right format to meet wine grape grower needs.

#### ***Upcoming Events Mentioned in the Roundtable Discussion:***

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

Apple Industry Roundtable (invite only)	November 18, 2025
BC Organic Conference	November 25-27, 2025
Grape Day at UBCO	November 26, 2025
Southern Interior Horticulture Show	February 11-12, 2026
BC Fruit Growers' Association AGM	February 26, 2026
BC Cherry Association AGM	March 6, 2026

## **4. OLD BUSINESS**

### **4.1 CURRENT PROJECT UPDATES**

Written updates were provided for all CCLSP initiatives.

### **4.2 CROSS-COMMODITY EXTENSION ROADMAP**

#### **a) 2026 Roadmap Workshop**

Kellie provided an update on proposed cross-commodity extension activities for 2026. She explained that a two-day conference for extension practitioners has been held the last 3 years, but with current budget and time constraints, that format is not feasible. Instead, the focus will be on continuing to advance the 2025 roadmap and to create a more coordinated approach to extension across organizations and commodities.

Kellie proposed holding an in-person committee meeting in January focused specifically on collaborative extension planning and updating the roadmap. She noted that last year the group identified the key issues, why they matter, and possible ways to address them, but did not define who could lead or take action on each one. The goal this year is to build on that work by assigning responsibilities and developing clear action plans so that progress can be made on existing priorities. Committee members agreed that this is a good approach.

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 CCLSP Professional Development for Practitioners**

Kellie noted that the CCLSP is willing to organize professional development for extension practitioners if committee members can identify what is needed. Committee members suggested several possible focus areas that could be useful, including leadership development, building capacity for extension, best practices for training new practitioners, and evaluating extension programs.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	
<b>MEMBER NAME</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>
Kellie/Shelby	Review PD focus areas suggested and determine feasibility of workshop.

### **5.2 CCLSP Survey**

Shelby walked the committee through the draft CCLSP stakeholder survey and invited feedback. The survey will be sent out to stakeholders at the end of the month to gather input on CCLSP's impact and recommendations for future collaboration.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	
<b>MEMBER NAME</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>
All members	Complete the stakeholder survey once distributed.

### **5.3 Proposed 2026 Meeting Dates**

The proposed meeting dates for 2026 are January 13, April 7, June 9, and November 3. Shelby will send out calendar invitations to the committee.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	
<b>MEMBER NAME</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>
Shelby	Send 2026 meeting invites

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The next Innovation and Extension Committee meeting will be held in-person in Kelowna on January 13, 2026.