

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Date:	April 30, 2026
Time:	10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Location:	In Person or Virtual: RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom (1450 KLO Rd, Kelowna) Teams Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 219 757 447 544 5 Passcode: LS7cr7Fs

MEETING AGENDA

1. **WELCOME & HOUSEKEEPING**

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Recommended Motion

“THAT the April 30, 2026, meeting agenda be adopted as presented.”

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

Recommended Motion

“THAT the January 29, 2026, meeting minutes be adopted as presented.”

4. **MEMBER ROUNDTABLE**

5. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

5.1 CCLSP Committees and Communications (Page 10)

5.2 Current Cross-Commodity Projects (Page 13)

a) Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project: Progress Report (Attachment 1)

Recommended Motion

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$225,000.”

b) BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes: Progress Report (Attachment 2)

Recommended Motion

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$46,200.”

c) Herbicide Technology, Best Practices, and Extension: Progress Report (Attachment 3)

Recommended Motion

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Herbicide Technology & Education: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$16,000.”

d) Research Briefs and Videos: Progress Report (*Attachment 4*)

Recommended Motion

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Research Briefs & Videos: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$57,540.”

6. OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Drought planning and response

6.2 Continuity planning for cross-commodity collaboration

7. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on June 30, 2026, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

CROSS-COMMODITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
April 30, 2026
Agenda No. 3.0

Minutes of the **Cross-Commodity Advisory Council** held in-person on January 29, 2026.

PRESENT

Adrian Arts
Alan Gatzke
Dapinder Gill
Gord Morrison
Jesse MacDonald
Kate Durisek
Madeleine van Roechoudt
Michelle Cook
Nikki Callaway
Philip Gyug
Shirley Choi
Sukhpaul Bal
Walter Makepeace

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

REGRETS

Beth Cavers
Bobby Ercego
Karen Yeung

BC Cherry Association
BC Grapegrowers' Association
BC Wine Grape Council

STAFF

Kellie Garcia
Shelby Austen

CCLSP Project Director
CCLSP Administration & Communications Manager

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by: Madeleine van Roechoudt

Seconded by: Alan Gatzke

"THAT the January 29, 2026, meeting agenda be approved as presented."

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by: Madeleine van Roechoudt

Seconded by: Adrian Arts

"THAT the November 27, 2025, meeting minutes be adopted as presented."

CARRIED

4. MEMBER ROUNDTABLE

- Phil mentioned that his team is focused on planning for 2026 in closer alignment with industry associations to help fill identified gaps. While Ministry budgets are tightening, there is still funding available for select projects in the Okanagan, and the Ministry is being more intentional about supporting large-scale producer events such as the Southern Interior Horticulture Show. He noted that Year 2 of the Enhanced Replant Program has closed, with preliminary commitments of 49 tree fruit projects covering 357 acres (\$1.5M) and 22 grape projects covering 272 acres (\$750K).
- Nikki noted a mild winter and shared a sense of renewed optimism across the industry, with stronger alignment and collaboration emerging between groups moving forward.
- Gord reported ongoing quality challenges and high cull rates in the apple sector. The industry has lost support from a large western buyer, who has shifted sourcing to Eastern Canada due to inconsistent apple quality. While demand for Canadian apples remains strong, maintaining consistent, high-quality fruit is critical.
 - Michelle asked whether pest or disease pressure contributed to quality issues. Gord said the issues were related to splitting, delayed picking, and volume pressures, not pests or disease. Michelle offered SIR support for pest and disease education if needed.
- Michelle shared that the SIR program is gearing up for the season. The Board has approved the budget, and the financial support from CCLSP was welcomed. The Board also approved tax increases and is working to diversify revenue sources, including increased costs to US customers.
 - Sukhpaul asked whether the tax increase affects the grower portion. Michelle explained that the Board approved an equal 10% increase to both the value tax and parcel tax, bringing the parcel tax to \$186 per acre for growers. She noted that without stabilization funding, the grower portion would have needed to increase further.
 - Adrian commented on negative perceptions around the value tax increase, noting that it amounts to roughly \$1 per household for the government portion. Michelle agreed that while impacts on growers and the public are considered, the Board aimed for a balanced approach this year.
 - Alan raised concerns about an increase in codling moth captures in the North Okanagan and Columbia Shuswap regions. Michelle noted ongoing challenges with cider operations, which can accept lower-quality fruit, and confirmed that identified hotspots will receive additional resources this season.
- Sukhpaul said the recent joint BCCA/BCFGA tree fruit meeting was productive and highlighted the need to plan ahead for the season. An unexpectedly large crop led to challenges with labour, housing, packing capacity, and trade. Powdery mildew has also re-emerged as issue, posing risks to export quality. He noted that Algoma reopening the BC Tree Fruits cherry packing line should help with packing capacity, but rising costs continue to threaten farm viability. He also shared that he will be participating in an upcoming Mexico trade mission to explore new market opportunities.
 - Adrian noted that powdery mildew is a key DAS model and asked about barriers to increasing cherry grower use of DAS. Sukhpaul suggested a more proactive alert system, such as monitoring DAS and pushing timely updates to growers, similar to the Regional District's Voyant alert system.
- Madeleine said late-summer heat and warm nights contributed to poor apple quality because keeping pace with harvest as fruit matured was challenging. She noted that the Global Club Access project will be highlighted at SIHS, and that her summer interview with Good Fruit Grower referenced the Access to Plant Materials project.

- Shirley shared that she continues to relay industry challenges to federal colleagues. She highlighted several market development opportunities, including the BC Agriculture and Food Export Program, now open until February 13, which supports trade shows, marketing materials, and digital marketing (early applications encouraged due to high demand). She also flagged the BC Farm Safety Program, which is currently open until fully subscribed.
- Jesse shared that there is an internal call for A-Base research project funding, and asked associations to submit any priority research topics for him to forward to researchers. He noted that industry support plays a significant role in funding decisions.
 - Sukhpaul requested research focused on mildew resistance.
 - Adrian asked about funding requirements and how to ensure research aligns with industry needs. Jesse explained that projects must align with current federal mandates, be national in scope, and demonstrate broad, multi-commodity impact. He added that packing and storability research may also fit well within this framework.
 - Kate asked about project timelines. Jesse said these are typically three-year projects.
 - Kellie offered to convene a meeting with commodity leads to better align priorities before submitting proposals for A-Base funding.
- Walt shared that he lost most of his tree fruit crop last season due to weather and had difficulty getting the remaining small crop packed. In contrast, he noted that his grape crop performed well last season.
- Adrian said he will be returning to Ottawa to continue discussions on how Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada is supporting growers. BCFGAs has rehired its lobbyist and is planning meetings with federal and provincial ministers, as well as MLAs. Advocacy efforts continue around Business Risk Management and labour. Current priorities include multi-lot insurance programs and exploring a backpacker labour program. The BCFGAs Annual General Meeting on February 26 will focus on labour, with representatives from Temporary Foreign Worker Program destinations and related programs attending to speak with growers. Adrian also noted upcoming tailgate sessions with Nutrien, covering topics such as thinning, aphid control, and harvest maturity.
- Alan commented on Algoma's recent grower meeting, noting a sense of cautious optimism in the industry. He also highlighted potential value-added opportunities, including collaboration with Algoma to ship culled product back east for juice processing.
- Dapinder said the BC Grapegrowers' Association Annual General Meeting is scheduled for February 10. The Board is currently finalizing the updated Executive Director position, with a candidate to be selected soon. Powdery mildew has been an issue in grapes following the small crop and reduced spraying, and BCGAs would like to be involved in related discussions. He also flagged crown gall damage from recent winter injury as a research priority.
- Kate reported that BCWGC levy collections are underway, with the annual report expected by June 1. Work is ongoing to merge the BCWGC grower portal with BC Wine Authority and streamline registrations. The grape production guide is being updated and linked to BCDAS, particularly around pesticide timing. She also noted ongoing work with the WGITF, including developing a shared asset and tool library, participation in CCLSP's governance support project, and the hiring of a post-doctoral researcher to support the BCDAS expansion.

5. REGULAR BUSINESS

5.1 CCLSP Committees & Communications

Shelby provided an update on recent committee and communications activities. Building Bridges 2026 replaced the January meeting of the Innovation and Extension Committee and brought 29 participants together to refine the cross-commodity knowledge transfer roadmap for 2026, with a formal roadmap now being developed. Work is ongoing with the WGITF, including organizational alignment and data strategy discussions related to BC DAS.

Communications work is focused on finalizing the 2025 Annual Review, preparing BC DAS engagement materials for the Southern Interior Horticulture Show, and delivering upcoming presentations to the SIR Board, the BC Cherry Association AGM, and the Southern Interior Horticulture Show, where two CCLSP projects will be featured. In addition, a new Advisory Council Highlights summary will be provided after each meeting to support Council members in sharing clear, consistent updates on CCLSP initiatives with their Boards.

- Sukhpaul asked whether there have been conversations about extending CCLSP. Kellie said staff are currently working on continuity planning. Madeleine suggested incorporating this discussion into the governance review process.

5.2 Stabilization Fund Report

Kellie informed the Council that the stabilization fund unallocated balance is \$38,912. She recommended that the Advisory Council request this amount be rolled into the regular CCLSP budget to be used for projects at the discretion of the Advisory Council.

- Kate asked what happens to underspent funds on current projects. Kellie confirmed that when a project is completed under budget the funding is moved back to the stabilization funding pot.
- Sukhpaul suggested using available funding to help cover BCAC forum admission costs for Council members when their association is unable to do so.

Moved by: Adrian Arts

Seconded by: Kate Durisek

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council recommends that the remaining stabilization fund balance of \$38,912 be rolled into the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project budget to be used for projects at the discretion of the Advisory Council.”

CARRIED

Philip, Jesse, and Shirley abstained from voting on the motion.

5.3 Current Cross-Commodity Projects

Written and verbal updates were provided for twelve CCLSP projects. Three projects required motions to approve reports and recommend release of funding.

a) ABAzyne Abiotic Stress Demonstration Trials for Cherries: Progress Report

Kellie referred the Council to the progress report outlining the status of all activities and deliverables. She noted that ABAzyne Bioscience will be presenting at the BCCA AGM.

- Kate asked about how ABAzyne Bioscience is dealing with challenges related to the costs of commercial infrastructure and scaling up the product for industry use. Kellie said ABAzyne has used

CCLSP funding to leverage additional funding and seems to be moving forward okay. She noted that they have achieved a ten-fold scale up of the product.

- Dapinder asked for clarification on the total spent on research and development for the product to date. Kellie said she will request this information.
- Adrian referenced ABAzyne's original proposal regarding a grower share system following industry investment in private R&D, and cautioned about avoiding potential conflicts of interest, particularly in discussions with local distributors. Kellie said she will follow up for information on whether industry has been invited to invest in the product.
- Shirley asked whether other organizations have contributed to the work ABAzyne Bioscience is doing. Kellie noted that ABAzyne is pursuing multiple partnerships and said she can request further details.

Moved by: Sukhpaul Bal

Seconded by: Alan Gatkze

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the ABAzyne Abiotic Stress Demonstration Trials for Cherries: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$60,000."

CARRIED

Philip, Jesse, and Shirley abstained from voting on the motion.

b) BC Access to Plant Material: Final Report

Kellie referred the Council to the final report outlining the status of all activities and deliverables.

- Madeleine noted that this initiative is not a pilot and should be treated as the standard process for importing plant material, which needs to be clearly communicated to growers. Kellie said BCFGa is developing a communications plan and next steps to support grower awareness and compliance, including a presentation at the Production Guide meeting.

Moved by: Madeleine van Roehoudt

Seconded by: Kate Durisek

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC Access to Plant Material: Final Report submitted by the BC Fruit Growers' Association and recommends proceeding with a final payment of \$12,917."

CARRIED

Philip, Jesse, Shirley, and Adrian abstained from voting on the motion.

c) BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes

- Kate asked whether grapes pay separately for Washington State University (WSU) services or if they are included in the current agreement. Kellie confirmed that SIR has one agreement with WSU and has not had to pay more to expand to wine grapes.
- Sukhpaul asked whether WSU has a BC DAS for wine grapes and whether results could be shared in-kind. Kellie said WSU is in the early stages of expanding the platform to wine grapes and the BC project team is collaborating closely with them.

d) BC DAS Operations

- Madeleine suggested using the governance study to explore a membership levy model that could support shared industry resources such as DAS, starling control, and other programs.

e) Bird Deterrent Education and Outreach

- Adrian asked whether additional industry advocacy is needed on bird deterrents, including follow-up to the letter submitted to Health Canada regarding the [Consultation on Proposed Amendments to the Pest Control Products Regulations \(Pest Control Product Devices\) - Pre-consultation, PRO2025-02](#). Shelby confirmed that the consultation is now closed, and next steps are currently unknown.

f) Financial Support for Producer Portion of SIR Program Costs: Progress Report

Kellie referred the Council to the final report outlining the status of all activities and deliverables.

- Michelle noted that SIR received provincial funding in 2023–24, and during a meeting with Minister Popham, the SIR Board Chair was encouraged to seek future support through the stabilization fund. She added that she is working with the SIR Entomologist to research other sterile insect opportunities available for tree fruit and wine grape pests and will present their findings to the Council in June.

Moved by: Walter Makepeace

Seconded by: Adrian Arts

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Financial Support for the Producer Portion of SIR Program Costs Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$175,000.”

CARRIED

Philip, Jesse, Shirley, and Michelle abstained from voting on the motion.

g) Governance Support Services for Industry Associations

- Kate asked about the consultant for the governance review. Kellie confirmed she is preparing a Request for Proposals and will begin recruitment shortly. Adrian said this project presents a good opportunity for facilitated discussions to clarify roles and mandates across organizations. Kellie agreed, noting the importance of understanding both individual organizational roles and how partners work together collectively.

h) Herbicide Best Practices, Technology, and Extension

No discussion

i) Local Government Engagement

- Adrian noted that following RDCO’s denial of the delegation request, growers living within the RDCO are encouraged to write to their councillors. Sukhpaul said a letter to the RDCO Board Chair would be welcomed on behalf of the partners, and Madeleine offered to send a letter if a template is provided.

j) Tree Fruit Production Guide Modernization

No discussion

k) PAC Point Tracking Modernization

- Michelle asked about the development timeline. Shelby confirmed that the contractor is confident in a three-month turnaround, with the goal of having the system fully operational ahead of next year's event season.

l) Regional Labour Coordination

- Madeleine emphasized the importance of using the deliverables from the recent Domestic Labour Research Project as a baseline for future work.
- Alan noted that the Regional District of Central Okanagan's Economic Development Commission (COEDC) is currently conducting a Central Okanagan Workforce Profile and Strategy. Kellie added that CCLSP has already been contacted by COEDC regarding this work.

m) Research Briefs and Videos

No discussion.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

7. ADJOURNMENT

The next Advisory Council meeting will be held in person on April 30 from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

MEMORANDUM

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
April 30, 2026
Agenda No. 5.1

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council

April 21, 2026

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

Subject: Update on CCLSP Committees and Communications

Innovation and Extension Committee:

Nineteen members attended the April meeting of the Innovation and Extension Committee. Following the Building Bridges workshop in January, the committee developed a seasonal knowledge transfer roadmap outlining commitments for each association, aligned with recommended actions in the tree fruit and grape production guides. The roadmap is currently being used to support accountability and coordination of events. At the April meeting, members reviewed their January commitments, tracked progress and status, and identified opportunities for collaboration.

Communications:

The [2025 Annual Review](#) was completed with graphic design from Wayside, and it was featured in the spring issue of [Orchard & Vine](#) (attached). In 2025, CCLSP engaged over 100 participants from 58 organizations, managed 17 projects by year end, and allocated over \$850,000 to industry associations. These efforts provided practical tools, data, and recommendations to support growers' operational and long-term decision making. Local government engagement also continued through bus tours and delegations.

We received 30 responses to our stakeholder survey, which informed the annual review and will also be used to support the continuity plan. The feedback shows strong support for cross-commodity collaboration, with respondents noting that working across sectors has strengthened alignment on shared priorities such as labour, regulation, funding, and data systems. Cross-commodity initiatives such as agricultural tours, extension events, and BC DAS were widely viewed as high-impact and as adding critical capacity that individual associations could not achieve independently. While collaboration is highly valued, respondents identified a need for clearer communication and stronger flow of information back to growers to maximize sector-wide impact.

A joint letter to Minister Popham was developed in collaboration with partners, requesting the strategic rehiring of a plant pathologist within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The drafting process was coordinated to incorporate partner input and feedback. The final letter was issued by the BCFGA on behalf of the Interior Horticulture Sector and signed by each association.

CCLSP staff also attended key industry events, including the Southern Interior Horticulture Show, industry association annual general meetings, and the District of Lake Country Irrigation Management Workshop. At the BCFGA AGM, staff supported elections, registration, and labour roundtable discussions. Updates on cross-commodity progress were also presented at the BCCA Annual General Meeting and the February SIR Board meeting.

Additional communications updates for DAS and the recent Kelowna Agriculture in Action tour are covered under agenda item 5.2.



Reporting on the growing impact of sector-wide collaboration

The tree fruit and wine grape sectors continued to show the value of collaboration in 2025. Now in its third year, the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project (CCLSP) has become an important place for industry to come together, share information and tackle common challenges. The new 2025 Annual Review highlights a year of steady progress and stronger connections across B.C.'s interior horticulture sector.

The workload in 2025 was substantial. Through the CCLSP and its advisory council, growers and industry groups set priorities to ensure funding supported real needs in orchards and vineyards.

Since the project launched, \$3.1 million of grant funding has been allocated to 19 cross-commodity projects.

The projects focus on top concerns: pest and crop management, labour shortages, better access to tools and information and clearer communication with local governments.

The cross-commodity initiatives are having far-reaching impacts. The access to plant materials project successfully opened the door for safe importation of high-quality nursery stock from the U.S. The decision aid system continues to give tree fruit growers reliable, weather-based decision tools and is now being expanded to wine grapes.

Scan to download the annual review of the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project.



Local officials joined growers in the field during Agriculture in Action tours, gaining firsthand insight into the realities facing B.C. farms.

Partners are focused on completing active projects, strengthening ties with local governments and creating a plan for collaboration beyond the pilot.

Work is also moving forward on updates to the Tree Fruit Production Guide and a modern pesticide applicator certificate point-tracking system. At the same time, industry associations are collaborating on regional labour coordination and stronger governance.

Industry engagement was another highlight in 2025. Over the year, approximately 50 people from 25 different organizations took part in cross-commodity meetings—showing strong interest in working together. The CCLSP hosted the Building Bridges conference, a well-attended event focused on improving knowledge transfer to growers. Two Agriculture in Action bus tours brought local government officials to farms to see firsthand the challenges growers face, helping build relationships and improve understanding of day-to-day realities.

As the CCLSP enters its final year, partners are focused on completing active projects, strengthening ties with local governments and creating a plan for collaboration beyond the pilot. The message is clear: when the sectors work together, everyone benefits—and the momentum continues to grow.

The CCLSP is funded by the Government of British Columbia through programs and initiatives delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. ■

Kellie Garcia, director, and Shelby Austen, administration and communications manager, manage the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project, strengthening collaboration and project management capacity for B.C.'s tree fruit and wine grape sectors. Learn more at crosscommodity.org.



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MEMORANDUM

CCLSP
Advisory Council Meeting
April 30, 2026
Agenda No. 5.2

To: Cross-Commodity Advisory Council April 23, 2026

From: Kellie Garcia, Project Director & Shelby Austen, Admin and Comms Manager

Subject: Update on Cross-Commodity Projects

Report on Budgets

Expenses – CCLSP operations

Expense Category	Estimated Budget	Q1 (Jan to Mar)	Budget Remaining
Communications	\$ 2,000	\$ 853	\$ 1,148
Meetings & Travel	\$ 8,600	\$ 1,108	\$ 7,492
Employee Expenses	\$ 213,200	\$ 51,488	\$ 161,712
Supplies, Software & Subscriptions	\$ 3,900	\$ 155	\$ 3,745
Rent	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
Contract Services*	\$ 43,912	\$ 4,081	\$ 39,831
Contract Admin (SIR 8.5 %)	\$ 23,342	\$ 4,903	\$ 18,439
TOTAL	\$ 297,954	\$ 62,588	\$ 235,366

*Note: CCLSP received approval from IAF to move the remaining TFISP balance of \$38,912 to the overall CCLSP budget to be applied to general projects at the Council's discretion. The \$4,081 spent to date was for the January Building Bridges event and deposits for the April Agriculture Tour.

Expenses – CCLSP administered projects (current and past)

Project	Budget	Spent Pre-2026	Spent 2026 Q1, Jan to Mar	Spent To Date	Budget Remaining
ABAzyne Trials	\$ 131,250	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 11,250
Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,517	\$ 14,517		\$ 14,517	\$ -
BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ 31,583		\$ 31,583	\$ 83,917
BC Fruit Works	\$ 143,302	\$ 143,302		\$ 143,302	\$ -
BC DAS Operations	\$ 300,545	\$ 224,527	\$ 79	\$ 224,605	\$ 75,940
Bird Deterrent Education & Outreach	\$ 15,407	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 15,407
Extension Practitioners Conferences	\$ 63,824	\$ 63,824		\$ 63,824	\$ -
Global Club Variety Access	\$ 45,714	\$ 45,714		\$ 45,714	\$ -
Herbicide Technology & Extension	\$ 36,750	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 36,750
Industry Association Governance	\$ 199,500	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 199,500
Labour Supply Research	\$ 112,408	\$ 109,270		\$ 109,270	\$ 3,138
PAC Point Tracking Modernization	\$ 55,125	\$ -	\$ 24,794	\$ 24,794	\$ 30,331
Research Briefs	\$ 143,850	\$ 54,800	\$ 27,400	\$ 82,200	\$ 61,650
TOTAL	\$ 1,377,692	\$ 747,537	\$ 112,273	\$ 859,809	\$ 517,883

Note: The following projects administered by CCLSP partners are not included in the table above: BC Access to Plant Material (BCFGA), Tree Fruit Production Guide Modernization (BCFGA), Regional Labour Coordination (BCFGA), Financial Support for SIR (SIR).

Revenue - CCLSP administered projects (current and completed)

Project	Total Revenue Expected	Received To Date	Remaining
CCLSP	\$ 894,570	\$ 638,642	\$ 255,928
ABAzyne Research & Trials	\$ 131,250	\$ 120,000	\$ 11,250
Agriculture Tours	\$ 14,517	\$ 14,517	\$ -
BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes	\$ 115,500	\$ 46,200	\$ 69,300
BC Fruit Works	\$ 143,302	\$ 143,302	\$ -
BC DAS Operations	\$ 300,545	\$ 240,000	\$ 60,545
Bird Deterrent Education & Outreach	\$ 15,407	\$ -	\$ 15,407
Extension Practitioners Conferences	\$ 63,824	\$ 63,824	\$ -
Global Club Variety Access	\$ 45,714	\$ 45,714	\$ -
Herbicide Technology & Extension	\$ 36,750	\$ -	\$ 36,750
Industry Association Governance	\$ 199,500	\$ 100,000	\$ 99,500
Labour Supply Research	\$ 112,408	\$ 112,408	\$ -
PAC Point Tracking Modernization	\$ 55,125	\$ 36,750	\$ 18,375
Research Briefs	\$ 143,850	\$ 57,540	\$ 86,310
TOTAL	\$ 2,272,262	\$ 1,618,897	\$ 653,365

**Note: Revenue for partner projects is not included in the above table and totals \$865,467 (\$12,917 for BC Access to Plant Material (BCFGA), \$100,000 for Tree Fruit Production Guide Modernization (BCFGA), \$352,550 for Regional Labour Coordination (BCFGA), and \$400,000 for Financial Support for SIR).*

Report on Progress

Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project

See Attachment 1: Progress Report

Recommended Motion

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$225,000.”

ABAzyne Research and Trials

There has been significant progress regarding the goals and objectives of the project. Their Chief Chemist visited their manufacturing facility to assist with the scale up process. The result was characterized as a “significant breakthrough” in the synthesis process that has increased efficiency, reduces costs (lower cost ingredients) and reduced wastes. This will enable the next step to produce product at the kg level and the next step will be 10’s of kgs and then 100 kgs. This will enable the team to have adequate product to conduct large scale field studies with growers this fall pending regulatory approval.

The research team visited the ISVV in Bordeaux France, which is the largest vine and tree fruit research facility in France and is a collaboration of 3 organizations: INRAE, Bordeaux University and Agronomic University of France. There is strong interest in the ABA Boost product to evaluate and conduct studies to determine its effectiveness in helping protect against spring frosts where needed and delay dormancy

where frost is not an issue. They identified three scientists who are interested in grape research and one cherry researcher who has conducted approximately 10 years of studies with ABA and cherries. They shared her summary of findings with Kellie as well as AAFC researchers. The information demonstrates a strong role for ABA in cherry phenology and suggests that the ABA Boost will be much more effective in dealing with frost protection in cherries.

Research agreements and product have been sent to University of Georgia (to test peaches), Washington State (cherries) and Michigan State (Cherries). In addition, they are expecting results from last year's fall and spring applications in Penn State and Cornell University.

A response to CFIA's technical review is nearing completion. This includes a toxicology assessment, label development and analysis of residual product in the fruit. Their consultant has reviewed the data generated to date and is optimistic that they will be successful in their registration process.

BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes

See Attachment 2: Progress Report.

Recommended Motion

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the BC DAS Expansion to Wine Grapes: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$46,200."

BC DAS Operations

We continue to meet weekly with the consultant. To date, Molly has hosted four DAS tailgate meetings in Kelowna, Vernon, Oliver, and Creston. Attendance has been modest, and DAS continues to be promoted at additional events, such as BCFGAs sprayer calibration courses.

All updates to the DAS website have been completed. Most articles were refreshed for clarity and enhanced with an at-a-glance section to help growers quickly access key information. A call-to-action flyer was developed to gather grower feedback as DAS funding nears its end and distributed at DAS field days, SIHS, AGMs, and other events. To date, 103 responses have been received. Feedback has been largely positive, with 60% of respondents identifying DAS as a primary decision-making tool, along with valuable narrative input to inform the long-term strategy.

We are also working with Fuse Consulting to develop a DAS "ecosystem" infographic. This evergreen resource will visually demonstrate the reach, value, and interdisciplinary connections of DAS across research, government, growers, export markets, and beyond, supporting both long-term strategy and funder engagement. A kickoff meeting is scheduled, and the final product will be shared once complete.

The BC DAS Steering Committee met on February 2 and April 16 and continues to show strong participation and engagement, reflecting the perceived value of the platform to industry.

Bird Deterrent Education and Outreach

Following careful review, the contract with ACARN has been cancelled and the project will now be delivered in-house. Preliminary work completed by ACARN will be transferred to CCLSP to inform the regulatory review and development of a bird deterrent resource booklet. The resource booklet will provide practical guidance for producers, including approved bird deterrent methods in BC, their effectiveness, and supporting information to help develop effective bird management plans. It will also include updated materials related to starling control. Once complete, the booklet will form the basis of a workshop segment that can be delivered at upcoming industry events. To extend the reach of the project, Twirling Umbrellas will be contracted to produce short videos and social media content.

Financial Support for Producer Portion of SIR Program Costs

Michelle will provide a verbal progress update at the meeting.

Governance Support Services for Industry Associations

The project will support five industry associations to strengthen their governance and organizational frameworks through a tailored, needs-based approach. An RFP process was carried out in April, with the Governance Guru being selected as the successful proponent. Over the next couple of months, the consultants will work with each association to assess its current governance status, clarify objectives, and co-develop an appropriate work plan and budget. The consultants will review relevant bylaw and policy documents from each association in May and meet with senior staff and board chairs in early June.

Herbicide Best Practices, Technology, and Extension

See Attachment 3: Progress Report.

Recommended Motion

“THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Herbicide Technology & Education: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$16,000.”

Local Government Engagement

The cross-commodity partner organizations (BCFGA, BCCA, BCGA, BCWGC, SIR) are collaborating on delegations to regional district boards and councils in the region. The purpose of the delegations is to introduce our tree fruit and wine grape industry groups, highlight shared priorities, recommend ways that local governments can support agriculture, and outline opportunities for engagement and collaboration. We are also advocating for an Agricultural Planning Manager to be hired by each regional district to act as a bridge between local government, the farming community, and provincial authorities. Their primary role would be to protect agricultural land, support the viability of farming, and align land use policies with agricultural needs.

We gave four presentations over the last few months. The first delegation was January 21 to the RDNO Board. Adrian, Michelle, Dapinder, and Kellie participated in that presentation. Board members had several questions and comments after the presentation and showed great interest in having an agriculture tour in the North Okanagan.

Following that presentation, we were invited to speak to the RDNO Agricultural Advisory Committee on April 9. The committee is very active and has around 20 members, including regional board directors, agricultural producers, and young farmers. Again, the discussion after our presentation went on for more than 30 minutes.

The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) Advisory Committee hosted us on April 15 at a special meeting focused on agriculture. The Committee is made up of 45 business, community, and local government leaders. Kellie gave a presentation about the cross-commodity efforts, which was followed by a panel discussion with Adrian, Sukhpaul, and Kevin Day, facilitated by Myrna Stark. The discussion focused on the big changes affecting the industry over the last 5 years and the current impacts of climate-related disruptions and global markets and trade pressures. We also discussed how growers are innovating and adapting and highlighted the benefits and importance of the BC DAS platform and the sterile insect release program.

Adrian, Dapinder, Michelle, and I also presented to the RDOS Committee of the Whole on April 16. Questions ranged from how to better communicate with farmers, to codling moth control in Keremeos, The South Okanagan agriculture tour was brought up by directors who attended as an excellent opportunity for engagement and learning. It was suggested that the CCLSP organize an agriculture tour as part of the next Southern Interior Local Government Association's annual convention, held in spring 2027.

We will be submitting delegation requests to Kelowna, Lake Country, Summerland, Oliver, and Osoyoos in the coming weeks.

The third *Agriculture in Action* bus tour was held on April 8 in partnership with the City of Kelowna. We had 43 registrations and 35 attendees. Stops included the Day's Century Growers packing facility, Jealous Fruits worker housing site, and Tantalus Vineyards. Key themes included urban-rural conflict, diversification, community understanding of agricultural practices, and policy alignment across jurisdictions. Feedback was widely positive, and a [summary report](#) was produced and shared with participants. The report is attached to this memo for your information.

Tree Fruit Production Guide Modernization (BCFGA)

The Tree Fruit Production Guide Modernization (TFPG) project is currently advancing through two major phases: Stakeholder Engagement (Pre-Design) and Content Review and Pre-Build.

Stakeholder engagement is underway (December 2025–May 2026), with presentations and feedback sessions delivered at the TFPG Technical Committee meeting in January 2026 and a Grower Meeting (virtual) in March 2026, reaching over 100 growers and industry participants. These sessions helped raise awareness of the project and provided opportunities for initial input. In parallel, surveys were administered to each group to gather more detailed insights.

Content review and update work is actively underway (December 2025 to May 2026), including the completion of an initial audit of approximately 608 production guide pages. This audit assessed key elements such as hyperlinks, embedded images, word count, and overall content quality, and is informing the ongoing organization and prioritization of content for migration.

Foundational planning activities, including design and development planning, resource hub categorization, and review of reference hubs to guide design and style direction, were completed in early 2026. A structured approach for deeper content review is now in progress to prepare priority materials for the new site, with follow-up discussions planned to align on next steps.

Implementation phases are scheduled for June to August 2026; while testing and feedback processes have been scoped and are planned for execution in Fall 2026. Overall, core planning is largely complete, and the project is progressing through key execution stages in alignment with the consultant's timeline.

PAC Point Tracking Modernization

Shelby continues to meet bi-weekly with Graphem Solutions. Phase 2, the design and prototyping phase, has been completed. During this phase, developers produced an interactive mock-up of the system, which required multiple working meetings to review and refine the components to ensure all feedback was addressed. Once key elements were finalized, the BCFGAs were engaged to provide additional input to be incorporated before moving into development. The project is now in Phase 3, the full feature build, which includes finalizing the functionality and appearance of the admin dashboard, grower self-service portal, events page, and collection system. Shelby and the BCFGAs are working closely with the development team to ensure all required features are delivered. Following development, a significant data migration will occur, transferring PAC data from 2019–2025 into the new system. Data for 2026 will be added manually after launch. The launch of the new system is anticipated in May.

Regional Labour Coordination

We are currently hiring for the Regional Labour Coordinator position. We received several strong applications, which were reviewed by the committee, and agreed on three candidates to interview. Interviews will be held the week of April 27. The committee meets next on May 4 in Summerland. Kellie is also working on a Request for Proposals for a Labour Needs Assessment to bring to the committee for consideration at that meeting.

Research Briefs and Videos

See Attachment 4: Progress Report.

Recommended Motion

"THAT the Cross-Commodity Advisory Council approves the Research Briefs & Videos: Progress Report submitted by the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program and recommends proceeding with an interim payment of \$57,540."

AGRICULTURE IN ACTION: BRIDGING POLICY & PRACTICE

April 8, 2026

The Kelowna Agriculture Bus Tour was held on April 8, 2026. The tour was organized by staff from **the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project (CCLSP)** and the **City of Kelowna**, bringing together farmers, local and provincial government staff, and industry partners for a full day of on-the-ground learning and discussions.

The purpose of the tour was clear: to strengthen communication and relationships between farmers and government, and to ground policy conversations in the lived realities of agricultural operations within Kelowna's growing urban environment. The day included guided visits to three local operations:

- **Day's Century Growers** tree fruit packing facility
- **Jealous Fruits** temporary foreign worker housing site
- **Tantalus Vineyards**

"Each stop offered insight into what it means to farm within Kelowna's city limits, from intergenerational operations to the challenges of farming at the urban edge. The tour was thoughtfully designed, well executed, and offered meaningful learning at every stop."

– Tour Participant



What We Heard

Conversations throughout the day were shaped by the tour stops, with farmers and staff speaking candidly about operating agricultural businesses in Kelowna's urban-rural landscape. Four key themes emerged.

1. Neighbour Concerns & Urban-Rural Conflict

The tour began at Day's Century Growers, a long-standing, family-run pear grower and packing facility located in the middle of a growing urban area. Surrounded by neighbourhoods and businesses, the site provided a clear example of the realities of operating agricultural infrastructure in an urban setting.

Farmers emphasized that **urban-rural conflict is often rooted in misunderstanding**, not opposition. Packing facilities, delivery trucks, seasonal noise, and early-morning operations are essential to farming - but not always well understood by nearby residents.

We heard that:

- Farmers invest significant effort into maintaining positive relationships with neighbours
- Open, proactive communication is often the most effective tool for reducing complaints
- Awareness of the Right to Farm Act is uneven, particularly among newer residents
- Farmers benefit when local governments help reinforce agriculture as a protected and expected land use



2. Vertically Integrated Farming, Diversification & Agritourism



At multiple stops, operators spoke about the importance of **vertical integration and diversification** to remaining viable in an increasingly unpredictable operating and economic environment.

At Day's Century Growers and Tantalus Vineyards, participants heard how controlling multiple parts of the value chain (growing, packing, marketing, and direct sales) can help buffer farms against poor crop years, market disruptions, and rising input costs. These approaches allow producers to adapt, stay competitive, and build resilience long term.

Agritourism and on-site experiences were also discussed as valuable tools for diversification, particularly when supported by clear and consistent policy frameworks. It was emphasized that successful diversification depends on maintaining strong ties to active farming.

Participants highlighted that:

- Active farming must remain the primary use on ALR land
- Clear, consistent policies are needed to support diversification and value-added activities without encouraging farm replacement
- Misalignment between municipal zoning and ALC requirements creates uncertainty, delays, and additional costs for producers

Overall, the discussions reinforced that well-designed policies can support agritourism and value-added activities while ensuring agriculture remains the foundation of these operations.



"Seeing Day's Century Growers highlighted how complex handling, packaging, and sales really are. While grapes are often seen as value-added, this stop showed that pomme fruit producers manage just as much work after harvest—an impressive operation to see firsthand."

– Tour Participant

3. Education & Outreach: Labour, Housing & Community Understanding

The visit to Jealous Fruits' temporary foreign worker housing site prompted some of the most detailed and personal discussions of the day. Participants learned about the significant care, investment, and regulatory requirements involved in providing appropriate housing for agricultural workers.

Farmers and hosts spoke openly about:

- Racism and misinformation faced by foreign workers
- Limited public understanding of who these workers are and the role they play
- The social and economic contributions workers make in the community

Discussion also focused on the **operational and financial impacts of housing delays, denials, and limited housing availability**. These impacts are often misunderstood, as farmers must house workers regardless of whether on-farm housing applications are approved.

These challenges impact **supervisory and management level agricultural workers** in particular, who are typically employed for longer periods, require greater privacy and space, and may seek to bring family members with them. When housing is unavailable, employers must rely on off-farm rentals, short-term accommodations, and/or dormitory housing with colleges, universities, or ski hills. Workers housed off site must then be **transported** to and from work locations, requiring additional vehicles, drivers, fuel, and scheduling coordination

Overall, the discussion underscored how **housing availability and approval timelines directly affect farm operations**, labour retention, and worker wellbeing—well beyond the housing units themselves.



4. Consistent & Supportive Policies & Regulations

Throughout the tour, growers highlighted the challenges of navigating inconsistent policies across jurisdictions, particularly those who are farming or housing workers in more than one municipality.

While participants acknowledged the **complexity local governments face**, there was strong agreement that:

- Predictable, aligned regulations make compliance easier for everyone
- Early engagement prevents unintended consequences
- Regional coordination is essential for shared challenges like worker housing

Participants welcomed news that the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) is planning to host a **regional planning lab focused on temporary foreign worker housing**, with partner municipalities at the table. This initiative was seen as a concrete opportunity to work toward policy alignment and shared solutions.

Next Steps

Short-Term Priorities

- Share this summary with Council, AAC members, and City departments
- Reinforce **Right to Farm** messaging through City communications
- Participate in RDCO's upcoming regional planning lab on farm worker housing
- Incorporate **on-farm learning** and agricultural resources into staff and elected official orientation

Longer-Term Commitments

- Work toward greater alignment between municipal policies, zoning, and ALC requirements
- Improve permitting clarity and timelines for farm diversification, agritourism, and worker housing
- Expand education and outreach related to agriculture, labour, and housing
- Maintain regular, informal opportunities for dialogue between farmers and City staff
- Support vertically integrated farming and agritourism initiatives that keep agriculture at the core
- **Continue advocating for consistent, supportive agricultural policies at the regional level**



Additional Resources

- [Agriculture Bus Tour Companion Guide for Local Governments](#)
- [2025 Agriculture in Action: Bridging Policy & Practice – Final Summary Report](#)
- [Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project](#)





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AGRICULTURE IN THE CENTRAL OKANAGAN: CHALLENGES, CHANGE, AND THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Agriculture in the Central Okanagan: Challenges, Change, and the Power of Collaboration

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APRIL 28, 2026



The latest COEDC Advisory Committee meeting featured a deep and timely discussion on the state of agriculture in the Central Okanagan, underscoring both the significant pressures facing producers and the critical need for stronger collaboration across the sector.

Strengthening Leadership Through Collaboration



the Okanagan Kootenay Sterile Insect Release (SIR) Program.

The project has become an important coordinating and leadership bridge following the dissolution of BC Tree Fruits, helping to reduce fragmentation and improve cross-commodity alignment. Temporarily funded by the Ministry of Agriculture through the end of 2026, the CCLS Project is focused on shared priorities including economic viability, farm labour and worker housing, horticultural support, water access, and government relations. "A sincere thank you to Myrna Stark Leader, the COEDC's Agriculture Specialist. Her support strengthens connections between agriculture and economic development, and the COEDC and agricultural community benefit greatly from her work," says Kellie Garcia, Project Director at the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project. While the initiative has strengthened collaboration and advocacy across the sector, participants emphasized the need for sustained resources to support this work beyond the current funding period.

On-the-Ground Perspectives from Industry Leaders

The meeting also included a panel discussion facilitated by Myrna Stark Leader, Agriculture Program Specialist with COEDC, featuring Sukhpaul Bal (President, BC Cherry Association), Adrian Arts (Executive Director, BC Fruit Growers' Association), and Kevin Day (Owner and Manager, Day's Century Growers).

Panelists spoke candidly about the impacts of the BC Tree Fruits Cooperative closure and the loss of a unified industry voice. While other regions are consolidating, the Okanagan's fruit sector has become increasingly fragmented, making coordination and advocacy more challenging at a time of rising costs and market uncertainty.

Producers are facing steep cost pressures, including fertilizer increases of approximately 80 per cent and labour cost increases of 20–30 per cent. Many long-standing operations remain viable largely due to efficiencies built up over decades, leaving little room to absorb further shocks.

Climate, Trade, and Infrastructure Pressures

Climate-related impacts are increasingly shaping production decisions. Smoke events are accelerating ripening in crops such as Bartlett pears, increasing reliance on controlled-atmosphere storage. Frost risk, water access, and limited reservoir capacity remain ongoing concerns, with panelists calling for improved coordination among local governments and agencies to advance water storage infrastructure in response to changing climate conditions.

Global trade pressures continue to disadvantage Central Okanagan producers relative to competitors in jurisdictions such as Washington State, where land costs are lower and orchard sizes are significantly larger. Trade volatility with the United States has further exposed vulnerabilities, prompting the cherry sector to pursue collective export strategies in Asian markets. Growers also noted that, despite high retail prices, producers receive a relatively small share of the final consumer dollar, particularly challenging for crops like cherries with limited storage options.

Innovation, Research, and the Path Forward



safety requirements and the cost of technologies such as grading systems, drones, and autonomous equipment that remain out of reach for many producers.

Panelists also emphasized the global importance of the Summerland Research and Development Centre, noting that roughly 80 per cent of the world's cherry varieties trace their origins to decades of research and breeding conducted there. With agricultural reinvestment in British Columbia lagging behind the sector's economic contribution, there was strong consensus that closer alignment between local innovation, policy, and investment is needed to unlock the region's long-term agricultural potential.

Call to Action

Agriculture remains a foundational pillar of the Central Okanagan's economy, but sustaining it will require coordinated leadership, long-term investment, and cross-sector collaboration. COEDC will continue to convene industry, government, and community partners to advance shared solutions.

If you are an agricultural producer, agri-business, researcher, or partner with an interest in this work, we welcome you to connect with COEDC and be part of the ongoing conversation shaping agriculture in our region.

The COEDC Advisory Committee is a 45-member group of industry leaders, community partners, and elected officials that meets monthly to support sustainable economic growth across the Central Okanagan.

Meeting minutes from this session are available online

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