

Council Members

1998 – 1999

Garnet Berge, Chairman

John Aalhaus, Vice Chairman

Ross Ravelli

Willy Rath

Irmgard Critcher

Ex Officio:

Harvey Glasier, BC MAF

Ian Pickering, PFRA

Council Objectives

The Council's goal is to enhance the grain industry in the BC Peace River region. As such, the Council is responsive to the initiatives of producers and producer associations and supports development initiatives that would result in increased opportunities for the BC grain industry.

Funding Program

The Council has established a funding program, using levy funds collected, to support projects which enhance and promote the BC grain industry. Assistance under the Program is open to all producer associations, private individuals, companies, industrial, private and public institutions, and Canadian Universities which undertake projects consistent with the program's objectives as specified below.

Objectives:

1) Infrastructure Support

- Commodity Organization
- Feasibility or Value Added Industry

2) Research

- Market Research
- Plant Breeding Research
- Agronomic Production Research

3) Market Development

- Identify New Opportunities
- Identify Existing Opportunities
- Improve Market Share

4) Technology Transfer

- Agronomic
- Marketing
- Financial management
- Safety and Environmental Concerns

5) Promotion

- Commodity
- Image Enhancement
- Education - Public Schools
- Food Safety

All applications must be forwarded directly to the British Columbia Peace River Grain Industry Development Council for evaluation by December 15th of each year for the following April to March funding period.

How the Council Works

In late June 1990 the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries introduced the “Farming and Fisheries Industries Development Act” in the Legislature. This act was passed by an Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council July 23, 1990.

The Act provided for the establishment of an industry commodity council whose mandate is to set and collect a levy and to fund field crop enhancement. The levy is legally enforceable and penalties are provided for those who do not comply. Initially, the council members were appointed by the Minister.

Pursuant to Bill 52, the Minister of Agriculture Fisheries and Food approved the election of producer representatives to the British Columbia Peace River Grain Industry Development Council. Accordingly, the council held a referendum and won the right to have elected members. The Council is composed of farmer representatives from the North and South Peace, along with a provincial representative from the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture & Food, and a federal representative from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The purpose of the British Columbia Peace River Grain Industry Development Council is to administer collection of the levy and evaluate proposals for funding. The Council will consider projects that foster and promote the field crops industry.

It is the policy of the Council to maintain one year’s levy collected in reserve prior to allocation. The Council collects a Levy of 0.33% of the gross amount payable on grain grown in the BC Peace River Region when it is delivered. For example, on a 400 bushel load of barley sold at \$1.50 per bushel, the Levy would be \$1.98. Producers contributing to the British Columbia Peace River Grain Industry Development Council have an opportunity to apply for a refund of the previous year’s contribution between January 1 and January 31. Refund request forms are available from the Council or at the elevators.

Other Funding Responsibilities of Council

The Council continues to work with all commodity groups in the Peace River Region and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food to allocate the Peace River Agriculture Development (PRAD) Funds. The first PRAD Fund was established in the amount of \$1.2 million from the Province of British Columbia in December of 1997. Following successful negotiations between the Provincial and Federal Agriculture Ministries, the Federal PRAD Fund, also in the amount of \$1.2 million, became a reality in May of 1998.

The Council successfully applied for a Western Grain Transportation Adjustment Grant of \$532,000 which was received during the 1997-1998 year. This grant funding is being directed towards agri-research and development initiatives in support of crop diversification in British Columbia.

PROJECTS FUNDED FROM LEVY ACCOUNT 1998-1999

Total \$24,357.00

(Projects totalling \$13,390.00 were approved in March 1998 and through the year an additional \$10,967.00 was approved through Council Initiatives. All projects were carried out between April 1998 and March 1999)

BC Grain Producers Association

1. Research Consultation Project \$2,582.50

Three representatives of this committee will attend the Expert Committee on Grains Research for the Prairie Region. Members of this association will also attend the advisory committee meetings for the Beaverlodge and Lacombe Research Stations, the Alberta Barley Council and the B.C. Coordinating Agriculture Research Council.

2. Transportation Project \$575.00

The concern with the rail transportation network is secondary to that of local road conditions and the inability of local farmers to deliver their grain production to the nearest railhead. The road maintenance issue has not only become critical in all grain producing locals of the BC Peace, but is critical for all resource producing segments of our economy.

The BCGPA intend to: hold two public forums; assemble interested representatives of affected industries; initiate public awareness through the circulation of a petition requesting action by the province; cooperate with the newly formed North Peace Rural Road Task Force (Economic Development Commission) and the Dawson Creek and District Chamber of Commerce.

3. Safety Nets \$690.00

There continues to be a need to spend time and resources to stay current on the issues surrounding the Crop Insurance Program, the Whole Farm Insurance Program (WFIP), and the Loan Guarantee Program. For example, the new look crop insurance, including basic and plus components require adjustment and synchronization of dates and requirements with Alberta. There will be a need to hold meetings with both producers and Ministry personnel to plan alternatives.

4. Farm Safety Project \$287.50

In 1998-99 this committee will continue to work with the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA) on the issues of farm safety and Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) requirements.

5. Canola and Pulse Committee \$2,817.50

This committee meets with their Western Canada counterparts such as the Canola Council and Alberta Pulse Growers Association. This communication helps to ensure we are aware of industry and commodities problems and activities that may affect all farmers.

6. Marketing \$1,437.50

A representative from the Marketing committee will attend all Canadian Wheat Board meetings held in this area. The committee will also investigate market opportunities and/or restrictions for our products

7. Cross Commodity Manager Survey \$2,967.00 (Council Initiative, June 1998)

A survey of various commodity groups was undertaken in June 1998 to determine whether a need existed for the hiring of a person to act for a variety of interests to promote the agricultural activities in the region. This survey has led to a commitment to proceed with the creation and funding of this position for a three year period.

8. Industrial Hemp Trials \$3,000.00 (Council Initiative, June 1998)

A pilot project to determine the suitability and productivity of early types of industrial hemp north of 55 degrees in the Peace River Region was undertaken in the summer of 1998. Additional funding for this project was received from Investment Agriculture.

Agriculture Canada, Beaverlodge

1. Liming Effects on Canola Production on Acid Soils \$10,000.00 (Initial funding of \$5,000.00 was approved in March 1998, and an additional \$5,000.00 was approved under Council Initiative in July 1998)

The objective of the project is to evaluate the effects of different rates of liming on soil properties, Brown Girdling Root Rot and yield of canola on acid soils in the Peace River Region. The project will be carried out in collaboration with the BC Peace River Soil Conservation Association. Council supplied funds in 1997 and 1998 for the first two years of this three year project, and has in 1999 committed funds to continue the work. As well, this funding will assist with the hiring of a Research Associate to focus on this project for a five month period.

WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ADJUSTMENT FUND
Project approved for 1998-1999

Total \$36,000.00

BC Peace River Grain Producers Association

Equipment Purchase/Lease for Variety and Agronomic Trials \$36,000.00

These trials involve testing new varieties of traditional and non-traditional crops against industry standards. This testing identifies those new varieties that are well adapted to the area, as well as those that do not perform well.

Additional equipment items are essential to add to the currently available resources so that the current level of testing can be more efficiently conducted, and the proposed increase of contract research can be undertaken. These additional contracts allows the project to reduce the per plot cost of conducting trials.

Equipment to be purchased or leased includes:

- Additional plot seeder
- Additional 50-55 HP – 3pt. Hitch tractor
- Power harrow with cage packer
- Modifications/improvements to current seeder
- Canola plot packer
- Japanese power driven walking single row rice binder
- Precision dribble fertilizer spreader
- Hand held computer for taking plot field notes