

## Final Report Prepared for PRAD and the BC Grain Industry Development Council



**Title of Project:** Cultivating Peace Agriculture  
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### **1. Member connection and public awareness:**

The BCGPA continues to engage in on-going communication between its members, directors and the public. Any issues or concerns raised through the membership to the BCGPA directors were acted on through the appropriate channels and resolutions reported back to producers.

- The website has been maintained with bulletins of upcoming events, past meetings, Newsletters, current contact information, including the toll-free number to the BCGPA administrative office. It also has links to other organizations that the BCGPA is affiliated with.
- A quarterly newsletter supplies producers with upcoming events, meeting reports, committee updates and relevant policy update information.
- A Research crop tour and BBQ supper on the Dawson Creek site in July provided an opportunity for communication during the supper and beyond. The gathering of quality speakers encouraged direct communication of the producer's needs to the individuals who can influence the direction of crop breeding and technologies.
- The BCGPA had a booth at the Dawson Creek Fall Fair & Exhibition, allowing for Janet Banman to interact directly with local producers and gain insight into issues they are facing. Recruitment and education for up and coming young people to get interested in agriculture/education for succession is always on the forefront

### **2. Research:**

- The BCGPA's research committee has been dedicated to ensuring that the research occurring through their department is relevant to the BC Peace, as well as being timely and proactive. Long-term funding has proven to be elusive for the Variety Trials research but funding has been secured for the next two years through BC Investment Agriculture Foundation and the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF). Martin Moore, as the research committee chair, is a director on the board of the WGRF, which allows the BCGPA a seat to promote and support a crop research network in Western Canada.
- Research committee members have overseen the management of the variety trials program by making suggestions and ensuring that the research team has the equipment and resources needed. Two members of the committee and the research manager attended the Prairie Grain Development Committee meetings in Winnipeg in February 2014 to participate in discussions regarding variety recommendation for registration. A local presence at industry meetings is critical for the success of the BCGPA Variety Trials research program. The research committee has had an active presence at the table where decisions are made that affect the agriculture industry in Western Canada.

- Research continues to be focused on energy crops, utility wheat, crop adaptation to pests, drought tolerance, frost tolerance and introduction of new crops to the BC Peace.

### **3. Environment:**

- *GMO*: After the Union of BC Municipalities voted yes to a resolution to ask the government of BC to ban all genetically engineered plants and food from the province, there was a flurry of action on fighting the resolution and getting correct facts out to the public. Irmi Critcher wrote letters in opposition to the resolution as well as refuted letters to the editor of numerous newspapers throughout the province. The resolution may well prove to have no teeth however, because regulations around food production is handled not at a provincial level, but at a federal one.
- *Peace Adaptation Strategies*: BCGPA has participated in 2 projects with the Climate Action Initiative this year, partially funded by ARDCorp. These projects included a consultation by Weather INnovations Ltd to find gaps in the weather monitoring currently available in the BC Peace with a report following outlining where the gaps are and how best to fill those gaps. This year was the first in a multi year project to allow for dedicated pest monitoring in the BC Peace region. A contractor was hired and will be based out of the Dawson Creek research facility until 2017.
- *EFP/BMP*: ARDCorp continues to deliver the remainder of the EFP/BMP program. In 2014, grains and oilseeds will be affected by the removal of fertilizer bin storage as well as fuel storage. There will also be a focus on group plans, which means BMP's will affect a multiple producers, not just individuals.
- *ALR/ALC*: The directors have been very active with meetings with the government discussing the proposed changes introduced to the ALR. Garnet Berge has been very active with the BCAC engaging in meetings with and proposals to the Agriculture Minister. BCAC membership launched a collective email and letter writing campaign to the government which resulted in proposed amendments to Bill 24. BCAC and the BCGPA remain firmly opposed to breaking the ALR into two zones.

### **4. Transportation:**

- *Locally*: meetings have continued with Caribou Road Services and the Ministry of Transportation about road conditions in the South Peace. As yet, the speed, conditions and quality of care for rural roads has not improved to the standard the BCGPA would like to see it at. The transportation committee will still continue to push for road improvements, as there are continuing concerns about the condition and safety of the roads.
- *Provincially*: the BCGPA was able to arrange permits with the Ministry of Transportation, which allowed producers to haul grain while the road-bans were in place in the spring of 2014. This was in a direct consequence to the backlog of grain after a bumper crop in the 2013 growing season.
- *Federally*: the BCGPA directors were instrumental in lobbying to have Bill C-30 (The Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act) tabled in Ottawa. The bill builds on the Order in Council announced on March 7, which set out minimum volumes of grain that Canadian National Railway Company and Canadian Pacific Railway Company are each required to move.

## 5. Business Risk Management

- *Production Insurance:* Issues continue with Production Insurance and a meeting that was scheduled for the spring has been indefinitely postponed. There is concern that a meeting will not serve the purpose it is intended for, as previous meetings have netted empty promises of change.
- *Invasive Species:* A director of the BCGPA sits on the North East Invasive Plant committee with advisement to the PRRD and the weed inspector for issues from the grain industry. The committee changed focus this year and has gone to a user-controlled format by which the owner of the land needs to control the weed or face a fine.

## 6. Marketing

- *Promoting Ag industry in BC:* Directors of the BC Grain Producers and General Manager had several opportunities to promote the agriculture industry by attending the Ag Gala hosted by BCAC in January, and outreach meetings and receptions sponsored by the Canola Council of Canada and the Canadian Grains Council.
- *Radio-grain prices and announcements:* CJDC 890 in Dawson Creek has given the BCGPA the opportunity of making use of the noon hour farm news and daily grain price time allotment. This free airtime has been useful in making timely announcements and has direct interaction with the farming public in a 400km area.

## 7. Food Safety/Biosecurity

- *OFFS:* After two straight years of an On Farm Food Safety program ran in the BC Peace with minimal success, this program was not offered through the BCGPA this year.
- *Biotech Coalition:* Janet Banman attended a meeting in June 2013 to investigate the appetite for starting a Biotech Coalition for BC. Biotechnology is a highly emotional and ethical topic for some people and pseudoscience propaganda creates fear and paranoia with the advancement of this technology. BCGPA was involved in discussions with the Ag minister explaining the beneficial role that GM crops play in BC agriculture.

**Summary:** In Cultivating Peace Agriculture this past year, the directors of the BC Grain Producers Association continued to represent the BCGPA membership on a number of committees including the Grain Growers of Canada, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Canola Council of Canada, BC Agriculture Council, Agriculture Research and Extension Council of Alberta, Investment Agriculture, Agriculture and Environment Partnership Committee and various local committees. They have represented the interests of the BC Peace Region grain & oilseed producers in matters relating to crop research, environment, wildlife damage to crops, farm business risk management, production insurance, crop market development options, transportation and biosecurity issues. The directors have met and received feedback from local producers on a regular basis and have brought their concerns forward to appropriate organizations and/or government agencies in a timely and professional manner. At times communication has been frustrating as they attempt to bridge the gap between local producers and organizations, government and non-governmental agencies and the general public for the good of grain producers and the food industry in general.

*Budget Information will be provided on a separate summary*