



Annual Report

for the Year Ended March 31, 2008

Council Members

2007-2008

Garnet Berge, Chair

Willy Rath, Vice Chair

Martin Moore

Ed Hadland

Barry Follensbee

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:

<p>1) Infrastructure Support -Commodity Organization -Feasibility or Value Added Industry</p>	<p>2) Research -Market Research -Plant Breeding Research -Agronomic Production Research</p>
<p>3) Market Development -Identify New Opportunities -Identify Existing Opportunities -Improve Market Share</p>	<p>4) Technology Transfer -Agronomic -Marketing -Financial management -Safety and Environmental Concerns</p>
<p>5) Promotion -Commodity -Image Enhancement -Education - Public Schools -Food Safety</p>	

All applications should be forwarded directly to the British Columbia Peace River Grain Industry Development Council for evaluation by December 15th.

How the Council Works

In 1989 the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries introduced Bill 44, the “Farming and Fisheries Industries Development Act” which was passed by the BC Legislature. Under this legislation, the “Grain Industry Development Fund Regulation” was passed by an Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council July 26, 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 representative from the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and a 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 and oilseeds grown in the BC Peace River Region when it is delivered. 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 Developments

Since 1997, the Council has been working with all commodity groups in the Peace River Region and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food to set up the Peace River Agriculture Development (PRAD) Fund. The PRAD Fund was established in the amount of \$1.2 million in December of 1997. These funds have been used since April 2002 to fund agriculture-related projects as outlined in the Peace River Agriculture Development Fund Annual Report compiled by the BC Peace River Grain Industry Development Council which is responsible for the distribution of the Fund under terms of the Contribution Agreement signed with the Province.

The Ministry successfully negotiated with the federal government for matching funds, and the Federal PRAD Fund of \$1.2 million was distributed between April 1998 and March 2002.

Peace Region Forage Seed Levy

At the request of the Peace Region Forage Seed Association, Council prepared a request to the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to set the rate of Levy on Forage and Turf Seeds at 0.75% of the gross amount payable by the first receiver. In April 2004 this request was officially approved by Order In Council and the Levy was collected beginning July 1, 2004. A report on the Forage Seed Levy, together with Audited Financial Statements, is attached to this report.

PROJECTS FUNDED FROM 2007 LEVY

Total \$97,684.80

Projects Sponsored by BC Grain Producers Association

Growing Peace Agriculture Year 1 of 3 (\$23,375.00)

Summary: This project represents a new approach by the BC Grain Producers Association with four main objectives being pursued over a three year period. The four objectives are listed below:

1. Initiate Communications with Producer Members:

The BCGPA will forge two-way communication between the grain & oilseed producers and BCGPA. This will provide a venue to share information regarding changes to the grain & oilseed industry to its membership; and, an opportunity for the members to give feedback and address any other concerns they may have. Any issues or concerns raised by the membership to the directors will be acted on through appropriate channels. Once a response is received or a resolution is agreed upon, the finding will be reported back to the producers. This method of communication among key players at various levels of production, industry and government builds trust, develops partnerships and successful outcomes.

This objective will be achieved in a number of ways. A survey of the membership will be conducted to identify current issues or concern. Information sessions, presentations and seminars will be held to update producers on current programs, policies and projects, as well as, to gather feedback from producers to decide on future action. There will also be regular website updates, a quarterly newsletter and other mailouts as required. A toll free telephone number will be made available to producers and the website feedback form will be promoted. In this way, BCGPA can immediately gather feedback on project progress and ensure that corrective action taken is indeed effective.

2. Improve Grain & Oilseed Techniques and Technology:

The BCGPA will continue to investigate new ways to improve grain & oilseed technologies and techniques in the Peace Region, as well as, seek out new avenues for crop varieties and agricultural research. They will oversee local crop variety and agronomic research as well as promote environmental stewardship in the B. C. Peace Region. Our directors will maintain a proactive approach in the research industry and implement changes that are necessary to the benefit of the grain & oilseed sector. They will seek the resources and tools necessary to stay on the competitive edge.

This objective will be accomplished by BCGPA representatives attending meetings, seminars, technology demonstrations and conferences. Our representatives will promote and support a crop research network in Western Canada. They will seek partnerships with research facilities on developing crop varieties, introduce crop species and agronomic practices that may be suitable to this region; and, will oversee a crop testing system to ensure they are both sustainable and viable for this area.

They will introduce new agronomic techniques and crop technologies through small-plot trials and initiate field scale trials of selected varieties and practices. They will attend local and provincial environmental stewardship meetings and participate in the implementation of container, pesticide and used oil collection programs.

3. Protect Producer's Income & Investments:

The BCGPA will maintain a first line of defense by meeting with and providing feedback to decision makers on policy changes and regulations on issues such as market access, farm income protection, and other possible threats to farm income. The BCGPA will monitor the grain & oilseed industry to increase awareness and influence decisions makers on behalf of the producers in the B. C. Peace Region.

This objective will be reached as a result of the directors attending meetings, seminars and conferences that are specific to these topics and the needs of the area. The BCGPA will initiate partnerships with provincial and federal transportation ministries to improve the movement of grain & oilseed in the B. C. Peace Region. They will continue to monitor the wildlife damage assessment project and influence changes to the provincial production insurance program. Information will be collected and reported back to the membership. There will be updates posted on our website as well as regular mailouts.

4. Promote Peace Region's Grain & Oilseed Industry:

The BCGPA will research and closely follow market trends while looking for new and creative ways to assist the grain & oilseed industry. Directors will represent B. C. Peace Region farmers at related meetings and strive to find market opportunities that will benefit this area and increase producer's marketing options. They will actively explore the biofuels industry and look for partnerships that will benefit the grain & oilseed sector. They will follow up on existing opportunities with Peace Biofuels to ensure that potential for market development is not missed. BCGPA directors strive to be proactive in their approach and this has earned the trust of BCGPA's membership by effectively presenting the issues with positive outcomes.

NOTE: The above project was funded at 25% of total project value through the Levy Funds together with "in-kind" funds of an additional 25% of total project value. This use of "Producer Funds" allowed each project to receive the balance of required money through the Peace River Agriculture Development Fund.

2008 Membership Fees (\$10,000.00)

Summary: To maintain current relationships, and to continue to have an influential opinion in marketing and lobby groups who's interests reflect those of the producers the organization represents. This project does not qualify for Peace River Agriculture Development Funds and is therefore fully funded by the Levy.

Objective: The objective of this project is to provide representation on prominent field crop related organizations as well as Agriculture Policy Development groups which are actively seeking solutions for current and future issues, ensuring that concerns and opinions of Peace region producers are heard and addressed.

Variety and Agronomic Trials (\$56,809.80)

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. Testing at locations within the region is essential as varieties differ in performance from region to region. This data is used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and by private industry for recommending crop varieties, and by producers in choosing which varieties to grow.

Projects currently underway (2007-2012): (This is Year 2 of 5 for these projects)

1. A New Western Canadian Cereal, Pulse and Flax Variety Evaluation System;
2. Cereal Variety Selection for Ethanol End-Use Suitability;
3. Peace River Region Hard White Spring Wheal Suitability Study;
4. Peace River Region Flax Breeding and Commercialization Project;
5. Western Co-op Barley Trials – Identification of High Yielding Malt Barleys;
6. Selection of New Field Pea Cultivars Adapted to the Peace River Region

This project is funded 15% by Levy, 15% by BCGPA Research Contracts & Industry and the remaining 70% from Investment Agriculture Foundation

Results are posted annually on the BC Grain Producers website at www.bcgrain.com

Project Undertaken in Co-operation with Alberta Canola Producers Commission and Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission (Year 5 of 7) (\$7,500.00)

This project – led by Dr. Kevin Falk of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Saskatoon Research Centre – funds a 7 year program aimed at developing high yielding *Brassica rapa* cultivars with resistance to brown girdling root rot, blackleg, white rust and clubroot. BC's portion of the \$100,000+/year project is \$7,500/year. This amount for the first three years of the project was provided by the Peace River Agriculture Development Fund. As that fund has a three year contribution limit per project, the remaining 4 years are being funded through Levy Funds.