



Annual Report for the Year Ended March 31, 2012

Council Members

2011-2012

Garnet Berge, Chair

Willy Rath, Vice Chair

Ed Hadland

Simon North

Barry Critcher

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.

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 should be forwarded directly to the British Columbia Peace River Grain Industry Development Council,
Box 6641, Fort St. John, BC V1J 4J1 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 2011 LEVY

Total \$ 116,191.50

Projects Sponsored by BC Grain Producers Association

Emerging Opportunities for Peace Agriculture (\$25,000.00)

The objectives of this project are to address the key issues identified in the BCGPA’s strategic plan: transportation, marketing, crop research, as well as on farm risk management, environmental issues, and member and public awareness. 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.

Member connection and public awareness:

The BCGPA will engage in ongoing communication between its members and the public, identifying producer’s concerns on current issues and ensuring the action taken is effective. 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.

BCGPA will strive to promote the image of agriculture to the public in an attempt to portray an accurate picture of how their food is grown, and to promote awareness of the BC Peace’s role in the production of grain & oilseed. This is also an

incredible opportunity to get some immediate feedback from the consumer, glean some marketing ideas, and hear what they think of the direction of agriculture. Public perception can make or break a marketing strategy. This objective will be achieved in a number of ways. A toll free telephone number will be made available to producers and the website feedback form will be promoted. There will be regular website updates, a quarterly member update and other mailouts as required. In this way, BCGPA can immediately gather feedback on project progress and ensure that corrective action taken is indeed effective. The BCGPA administrator and directors will be involved in consumer education opportunities such as Ag in the Classroom, Ag in the City, agricultural show booths, or other venues which may be available.

Research & Innovation:

The BCGPA 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. Research councils need to be put in place, so this could become a very active area.

Directors and members of the BCGPA will take part in local and regional meetings to have input into the direction of research in Western Canada. Representatives will attend the Alberta/British Columbia Cereal and Oilseeds Advisory Committee meetings and contribute to the approval of crop varieties for registration, and have a voice in issues facing the research community. A representative will attend the Western Grains Research Foundation meetings. They will also take part in committee meetings to direct the BCGPA research plots, have input into trials to be grown on them, and promote connections for private and public research conducted on site.

Environment:

The BCGPA will address and keep informed on current environmental issues. The whirlwind of environmental policies and jargon can be difficult to sort out, so representatives from BCGPA will attend meetings regarding current issues such as climate change and carbon credits and keep abreast of the issues in order to have an informed voice and interpret the jargon for the membership. They will promote environmental stewardship to ensure sustainable production.

Representatives of BCGPA will attend provincial and national meetings held by the Grain Growers of Canada, BC Agriculture Council, and others relating to environmental issues. They will attend BCAC meetings and represent the grain and oilseed sector in discussions regarding the Environmental Farm Plan program in BC and promote the program in the BC Peace.

Transportation:

The BCGPA will strive to ensure market accessibility for BC Peace grain & oilseed crops. There are limited grain movement options available, and grain must be moving in order for producers to be able to deliver their product. Rural roads and highways are an avenue of grain transportation and must be maintained adequately. Rail cars must be supplied at the crucial times to keep the grain elevators and terminals able to accept grain. The Rail Service Review is now completed, and the recommendations will be implemented nationally, and local input will help guide this process for our area.

Representatives will attend local and provincial meetings regarding road and rail transportation to voice concerns and work towards solutions. They will communicate with provincial and federal transportation ministries to improve the movement of grain & oilseed in the B. C. Peace Region.

Business Risk Management:

The BCGPA will have input into policy changes and regulations on issues such as 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 held by the Grain Growers of Canada, Canadian Canola Growers Association and others. The farm safety nets programs are in a constant state of re-creation in search of the ultimate farm insurance program and our representatives can have input into the process. Representatives will take part in consultations regarding the Federal Growing Forward Phase II, which will be ready for implementation in 2013.

Marketing:

The BCGPA will investigate marketing options, barriers to markets, and follow market trends in order to increase BC Peace grain and oilseed producer's marketing options. Representatives will attend related meetings held by the Grain Growers of Canada, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Canola Council of Canada, Canadian Wheat Board, the Provincial Trade Committee, and others. In the event of the likely change in the Canadian Wheat Board, producer information sessions will be held to make area producers aware of these changes, their options and the resulting probable effects. With the revision of the Grain Act, all prior recommendations will need to be revisited. The Provincial Trade Committee is going to be re-activated due to the Trans Pacific Partnership, and WTO, CETA and South Korea trade agreements need to be re-negotiated.

Food Safety

The BCGPA will investigate issues regarding biosecurity and food safety as related to grain and oilseed producers. The On Farm Food Safety program will be supported and promoted, and any other relevant food safety meetings will be attended in order to be aware of new market demands. Information will be relayed to producers so these adjustments can be considered.

2012 Membership Fees (\$11,000.00)

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 (\$80,191.50)

Several forces have in recent years caused grain and oilseed production to become more challenging in the Peace River region, and likely other northern prairie regions as well. First, climate change has come and has taken the form of extreme variability to the seasons in northern regions, giving the term "normal season" little meaning any more. We can still arrive at a climatic 30-year average to use in our season's end climate reports, but an average is all it represents. Recent years have seen record breaking droughts or extreme rainfall causing local flooding, both on magnitudes not seen for generations by producers in our region. We need crops and specific varieties within those crop commodities that can make the best of what our region has to offer, primarily, additional sunlight in May through July. We can no longer add, "and ample rainfall within the growing season", nor say "free of disease influence", since these statements are no longer true. Therefore we must help develop these crops and specific varieties through active testing here in the Peace River region. They also need to be able to handle the extreme weather our region has come to express, particularly since that fluctuation is predicted to continue for the near foreseeable future thanks to global climate change. Extremes can come in the form of backward cold weather in the spring (essentially drastically reducing full growth potentials), often well after planting is complete or within the very sensitive "seedling" stage or drought at any time in the growth cycle. But it can also manifest as excessive rainfall or a combination of these three stresses all in the same growing year.

The second force is of the economic type, but equally out of the producers' hands for control unless they have access to suitable tools - namely, improved crop varieties and options. From a scientific point of view, we need to seek out varieties and new crop opportunities via brand new commodities or by enhancing existing ones in order to be able to present a stronger product the end-user will want, providing one of a quality they will want to purchase from our region, but at a yield level advantageous to the producer for his or her own livelihood. Seeking out "more qualified" materials that can be grown in our region to maximize quality for the end-user but strong yield potential for the producer will achieve our goal of sustaining agriculture in this area for years to come.

Projects currently underway (2012-2017): (This is Year 1 of 5 for these projects)

1. Performance Evaluation of New Genetic Materials for Canola, Cereals, Pulse and Flax for the Peace River Region;
2. Triticale Variety Selection for Ethanol End-Use Suitability;
3. Lentils Response to Northern Climates Suitability Study;
4. Development of Flax for the Peace River Region;
5. Western Barley & Oat Co-op Trials – Identification of High Yielding Malt Barleys;
6. Selection of New Field Pea Cultivars Adapted to the Peace River Region;
7. Dry Bean Response to Northern Climates Suitability Study;
8. Winter Wheat Response to Northern Climates Suitability Study;
9. Spring Wheat Response to Seeding Rate under Seasonal Climatic Variations;

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