

British Columbia Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

Terms of Reference

COMMITTEE NAME

The Committee shall be referred to as the **British Columbia Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment**

PREAMBLE

British Columbian's want a prosperous agriculture industry that is environmentally and economically sustainable. They expect that the industry will operate in compliance with an environmental regulatory framework that is transparent, consistent and efficient. The agriculture sector has the right to expect an acceptable level of regulations and guidelines that are developed in a consultative and coordinated manner, and are administered equitably across the industry. These expectations require a close working relationship and mutually beneficial partnership between the agriculture industry, governments and the communities in British Columbia that host agricultural activity.

COMMITTEE'S VISION

A prosperous agriculture sector that strives to be a global leader in environmental and community sustainability.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Environmental Conservation and Protection:** Agricultural policies and practices, and industry development will be conducted in a manner that protects and conserves the environment.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Environmental protection policies and initiatives will consider the economic sustainability of agriculture.
- **Consultation:** The agriculture industry and governments will consult with one another in a timely, inclusive and transparent manner.
- **Cooperation and Consensus:** Industry and government will work in a cooperative manner and seek consensus on joint initiatives and solutions.
- **Regulatory Certainty and Equitability:** Environmental regulations will be fair, consistent and predictable and will be administered in an equitable manner.
- **Prevention and Stewardship:** Agricultural practices will work to prevent environmental degradation and encourage individual and community stewardship.

OBJECTIVES

- **Communication:** To foster effective communication between industry and governments and, as appropriate, with other interested parties.
- **Consultation:** To serve as the primary forum for consultation on current and emerging agriculture/environment issues including legislative initiatives of governments.
- **Solutions:** To find and promote workable solutions with respect to environmental issues affecting the agriculture industry.

- **Coordination:** To provide coordination to the actions of industry, government and communities to resolve agriculture/environment issues.
- **Timeliness:** To ensure issues are resolved and solutions implemented in a timely manner.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall include representatives from: (updated nomenclature)

- British Columbia Agriculture Council
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection
- Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
- Land and Water BC
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Environment Canada
- Union of British Columbia Municipalities

Representatives shall include Executive members or their designates. For provincial agencies this means representation at the Assistant Deputy Minister level, and for federal agencies at the Regional Director level. For the B.C. Agriculture Council, this means producers in Executive positions or their designates within member organizations, and for the Union of B.C. Municipalities at least one of the two members shall be an elected official. Staff of agencies and organizations will be invited as appropriate on specific issues and as on-going ex-officio members to ensure continuity in the operation of the Committee.

Other agencies and organizations will be invited to meetings that deal with specific issues that fall within their mandates. For those agencies and organizations expressing an interest, particularly academic institutions, the Committee may consider granting a permanent observer status on application by the agency or organization.

REPORTING

The Partnership Committee will report publicly to the Ministers or agency and council executives annually, and will be accountable for providing clear measures of progress towards objectives.

Approved minutes of Committee meetings will be posted on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and other member websites as appropriate, and will otherwise be made widely available.

RENEWAL OF MANDATE

The Committee will seek to renew the mandate annually at a meeting of the Committee with Ministers of federal and provincial member agencies, the President of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and the chair of the British Columbia Agriculture Council. It is recognized that the annual meeting is intended to be with Minister and heads of organizations but that to facilitate scheduling, designates may be permitted as necessary.

COMMITTEE PROTOCOL

Chair: Responsibility for chairing the meetings of the Committee will rotate between the Ministries of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and Water, Land and Air Protection, and the B.C. Agriculture Council.

Decisions: The Committee will strive for consensus based decisions which will be recorded in the meeting minutes. Agencies can abstain from any decisions due to lack of mandate or any other legitimate reasons. Where consensus agreements cannot be reached, the Committee will provide options and recommendations to senior management in agencies and the B.C. Agriculture Council to ensure informed and timely decision-making.

Task Groups: The Committee may form task groups to deal with a range of issues. Once formed, task groups may be requested to develop a terms of reference for approval by the Committee.

Authority of Committee Members: To the extent possible, the Council and agencies will authorize their Committee representatives to make decisions on their behalf during the Committee meetings. Where a representative is unable to make such a decision they will so inform the Committee during the meeting.

Conferring with Others: Council and agency representatives may need to confer with others in their respective organizations before being able to provide the Committee with an official position. The Committee members are responsible for conferring with others and reporting back to the Committee in a timely manner.

Annual Work Plan: The Committee will produce and monitor throughout the year an annual work plan which will specify priority issues, activities, deliverables and performance measures for the work of the Committee and its task groups.

Priority and Secondary Issues: The Committee will maintain and update annually a list of priority and secondary agriculture/environment issues that will guide the work of the Committee and assist in setting priorities for action.

- All primary issues will be referred to the Committee, will form the main items for discussion at meetings and the Committee will oversee action plans and task forces.
- All secondary issues will be referred or reported to the Committee to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are established to deal with the issue.

Program Delivery: It is recognized that members are responsible for a range of agriculture and environment initiatives and agree to seek the advice and input of the Committee in setting priorities for and delivering these programs.

Communications and Outreach: Members will be responsible for communicating the work of the Committee within their agency and/or constituent organizations and to their associated stakeholders, and will also consider what additional communications and outreach activities that may be necessary to achieve the Committee's objectives.

AGENCY MANDATES

Nothing in these Terms of Reference may in any way fetter regulatory agencies from carrying out their regulatory responsibilities.

REPLACEMENT OF PREVIOUS AGREEMENTS


These Terms of Reference replace the previous version signed by the parties in 2000.

REVIEW

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed within five years from the date of signing.

SIGNATURES

BC Agriculture Council

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

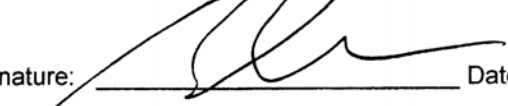
Name: GEORGE HAMILTON

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

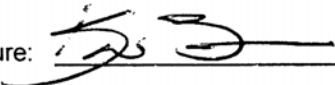
Name: PERRY McALPINE

Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

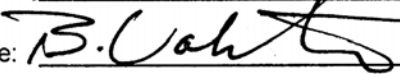
Name: KEN BAKER, ADM.

Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

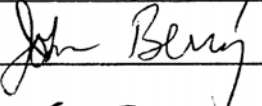
Name: Bill Valentine

Land and Water BC

Signature:  Date: March 9, 2004

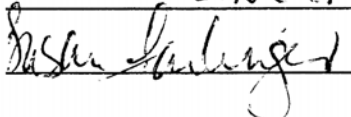
Name: John Berry

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

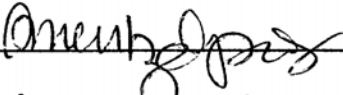
Name: S. FARLINGER

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

Name: SUE FARLINGER

Environment Canada

Signature:  Date: March 9 2004

Name: A. mentzelopoulos

Union of British Columbia Municipalities

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____