



**Investment
Agriculture
Foundation**
of British Columbia

Agricultural Area Plan Case Study **Township of Spallumcheen**

The Challenge

With almost 17,000 hectares of agricultural activity by 442 farms and the motto, “*Where farming comes first,*” the Township of Spallumcheen wanted to place a high priority on the local agriculture industry. As 80 per cent of their land is in the Agricultural Land Reserve, the township wanted to ensure that good farm land was retained.

The challenge was to develop an agricultural plan that would ensure the continuing sustainability of a vibrant agriculture sector in order to generate the quality of life, lifestyle and societal amenities that the municipality wanted.

The Situation

As the Spallumcheen farms provided B.C. residents with a considerable portion of dairy and poultry products, among many other agricultural goods, the township’s large tracts of farmland were drawing considerable interest from investors in the Lower Mainland. This made having an agricultural area plan a top priority at the start of 2006. There were several issues the townships was dealing with that the plan had to consider including the protection of the resource base, agriculture viability, agro-environmental interface, regulatory issues and the profile of agriculture to community members.

The Agricultural Area Plan

Through \$10,000 provided by the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF), a not-for-profit organization that manages and distributes federal and provincial funds in support projects to benefit the agriculture and agri-food industries in BC, and other funds from the Agricultural Land Commissions and Ministry of Agriculture and Land (MAL), the Township of Spallumcheen set out to create a viable agricultural area plan to accomplish several goals that sought to protect and preserve agricultural land base while ensuring sustainability in farming:

- Strengthen the farming industry;
- Establish cooperative relationship between township and government organizations (such as the Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, etc.);
- Minimize community conflicts from agriculture activities;
- Retain good valley bottom land for agriculture use.

Results

A year later the plan was successfully integrated into the township decision making. Today, it is still an important part of agricultural development in Spallumcheen as it is used a guiding tool that has helped to achieve the goals set out initially.

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Although no report has been specifically conducted as the results from the 2006 agricultural area plan are still in progress, there has been a definite increase in farm productivity. This is shown in comparing the Township of Spallumcheen's agricultural profiles from 2001 to 2006 conducted by Statistics Canada¹:

- Total area of farms have increased from 16,264 hectares to 17,155 hectares;
- Total gross farm receipts (excluding forest products sold) increased from \$38 million to \$57 million;
- Total farm capital (market value in dollar) increased from \$270 million to \$500 million.

¹ 2006 community profiles:
http://www26.statcan.ca:8080/AgrProfiles/cp06/Table1.action;jsessionid=618718D2F6172B1DD0443A4CB1FFDB54?prov=59&geog_id_amal=590337024&tab_id=1&letter=S&loccode=34608&placename=spallumcheen&geog_id=590337024

2001 Agricultural community profiles:
<http://www25.statcan.ca:8081/AgrProfile/showData.jsp?LocCode=034608>