

Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission

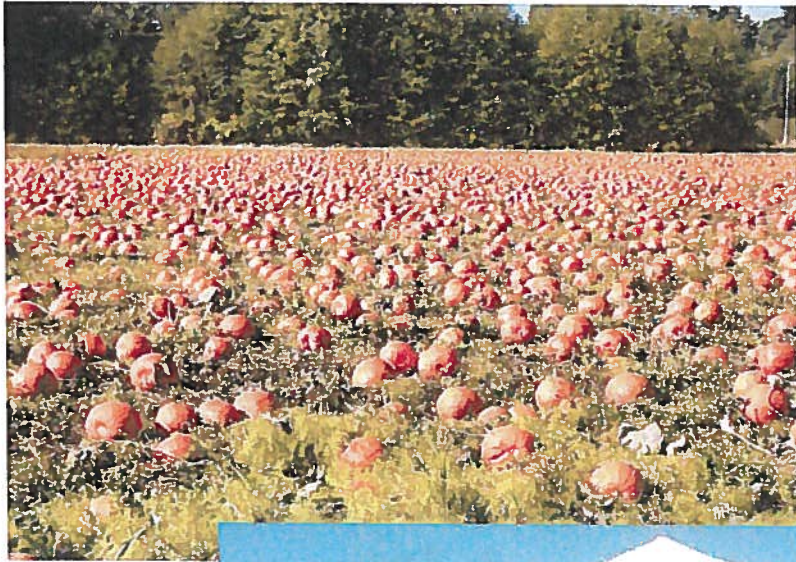
2017 Annual Report

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Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission

2017 - ANNUAL REPORT

Background:

The Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC) was initially formed during 1997/98 with the completion of the **Agricultural Strategy Report for the Saanich Peninsula** and is now entering its 21st year of operation.

Mandate:

To provide advice, information and assistance to the Districts of Saanich, Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Metchosin (the 'member municipalities') - upon request or proactively - on matters involving agriculture in the areas served by the member municipalities and the region as a whole, and to facilitate the development of programmes for implementation of *the Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Strategic Objectives* (see page 7).

What did we accomplish during 2017?

With the help of the member municipalities, both Council and staff, the highlights of the Commission's accomplishments during 2017 include:

Winter Lecture Series: Bee & Pollinator Workshop

In February, 2017, PAAC hosted a very successful Bee and Pollinator Workshop at the Saanich Fairgrounds. Farmlands Trust contributed towards the event and the Saanich Fairgrounds provided the space at no charge.



Photo: Rob Bowen

- Anticipating attendance of around 40 or 50 people, we were astounded when registration topped 145 participants.
- Dr. Lora Morandin, Pollinator Partners, and Lindsay Dault, Urban Bee Honey Farm, each presented on the importance of protecting our pollinators.
- Attendees wanted to know what to plant to boost the pollinator populations. This does not just involve farmers or home gardeners, but also municipalities, landscapers, schools, businesses and institutions.

Did you know that:

Although bees are the most common, any animal can be a pollinator – transferring pollen from one plant to another

We have over 20,000 species of bees vital to the natural environment and crop pollination

One third of the food we eat is a direct result of pollination

- Meetings were arranged with stakeholder groups, including municipal staff, to brainstorm, gather knowledge and determine the next steps.
- This resulted in a coalition being established – Island Pollinators Initiative (IPI), with Dr. Morandin taking the lead. Members include a diverse group of individuals, businesses and organizations committed to the cause.
- Much progress has been made over the past year with talks and presentations at seed sales and farms, as well as regular email communications and meetings to keep everyone involved in

this inter-active group up to date. PAAC has a representative, current Co-Chair Bob Maxwell, who attends IPI meetings on the Commission's behalf.

Vision Sandown

At the request of North Saanich, PAAC conducted an on-site tour of Sandown, looking at the soil capability and its suitability for agriculture, the current infrastructure and drainage potentials.

- PAAC provided a detailed report on its findings (*attached as Appendix A*). Areas with excellent fertile soils (Class 2DW) and farming capabilities were found.
- It was also noted that the washrooms, jockey buildings, and grandstands are assets for farm and agricultural-related operations, including most of the asphalt roads and parking area. PAAC recommended these assets should be maintained

– although it was acknowledged that unfortunately the first stage of remediation will be the removal of the grandstand and other buildings.

- PAAC is grateful to the support for agriculture shown by North Saanich in acquiring this 85-acre parcel and we look forward to working with the District on future plans for the land.

Saanich Fair – 2017

This year PAAC teamed up with CRFAIR and a host of organizations working to promote and protect pollinators called the *Island Pollinator Initiative*.

- At our booth we had information and displays as well as book signings by pollinator experts.
- We had a bountiful display of Squash and other vegetables grown at Marr and Mitchell Farms and provided information on PAAC and the ever popular recipes for the local harvest handout created by PAAC members Diane Williamson and Beverly Marley.
- We held the Zucchini Races again this year which are always a big hit with the kids. We even had a few kids bring their own zucchinis that they had grown from the seeds distributed last year.
- PAAC thanks the volunteers – including some Councillors - who gave up their time to help in the booth over the 3 days of the Fair.



On Going Issues discussed at PAAC Meetings:

Due to the nature of the topics and the determination of PAAC members, some problem issues are discussed many times throughout the year at our meetings. Often we have experts in that particular field attend, such as municipal planners, engineers, or guest speakers. The Commission is ever hopeful that eventually solutions will be found for these crucial agricultural issues that require direction and assistance from multi levels of government.

Martindale Valley Drainage:

The Municipalities of Saanich and Central Saanich continue to work on an Integrated Water Management Plan for the Martindale Valley to address to continuing flooding that occurs, preventing farmers from accessing the fields in the early spring. *(See Land Base Report, page 11 for details)*

Maber Flats Drainage:

Although progress has been made over the past year with ditch and culvert maintenance in an attempt to control the water table, flooding and drainage issues continue on Maber Flats. PAAC presented a detailed report to Central Saanich (attached as Appendix A). Central Saanich has issued a request for proposals for water management systems. *(For more details Land Use Report, page 12)*

Farm Worker Housing:

Housing for foreign workers has been a topic of discussion for many years without successful resolution.

Currently, within BC, 25,000 farm workers are living on farms, and the number continues to grow each year. Agricultural production hit a record \$15 billion in 2016 and PAAC feels that agriculture does not get the respect and support it deserves.

Farm Worker Housing (FWH) does exist in Central Saanich, North Saanich and Metchosin in various forms, with diverse regulations. Saanich, through its Saanich Agriculture and Food Security Plan (see page *) has agreed to look into the issue.

Strict guidelines are set out by the foreign consulates regarding the housing provided. PAAC will continue to be an advocate for our farmers and would like to see all municipalities on the same page in terms of regulations, combine resources and work with the Agricultural Land Commission.

We hope some definitive progress is made in 2018.

Geese & Deer:

Farmers are still losing crops, and subsequently money, from the damage caused by geese, and now to a lesser degree deer.

Jeff Weightman, CRD, continues to coordinate egg addling programmes and we are grateful for the CRD's support. Egg addling helps to “maintain” the current populations but only a cull will eventually reduce the number to a manageable level.



PAAC believes that all levels of government need to get involved and take action. A successful cull of between 500 and 600 birds was carried out in Parksville due to a cooperative landowner. Public education on the importance of culls is vital to success of the programme.

Goose populations continue to increase each year; this is a serious issue that is out of control. Playgrounds, parks, foreshores, water quality and airport safety are also affected.

Main Issues Discussed at PAAC Meetings During 2017

- Winter Lecture Series & Bee Habitats *(see page 1 & February 2017 minutes)*
- Regional Goose & Deer Management Strategy *(see page 4)*
- Martindale Valley and Maber Flats Drainage *(see pages 3 and 12)*
- Vision Sandown *(see page 2)*
- Farm Worker Housing *(see page 4)*
- **PAAC Historical Agriculture & Food Project**

Further to a generous grant from the **Fruit Growers Association of BC**, that disbanded in 2016, and with the assistance of the **Saanich Archives**, PAAC was able to put together a historical photo collection that was displayed at the 2016 Saanich Fair and the 2017 Farmer2Farmer workshop.

PAAC wanted to take this a step further and prepare a written history of food and agriculture on the Saanich Peninsula. However, it was later discovered that a couple of groups are already working on this idea.

In order to enhance the work that is already taking place, PAAC decided it would be beneficial to conduct interviews with our long-time farmers to get some perspective on the differences on when their families first started farming from the Peninsula compared to the practices used today.

We have a list of potential farmers to interview, as well as a number of questions to ask them. This project is still in its early stages and we hope to make some steady progress in 2018.

- **Panama Flats**

Saanich acquired the property known as Panama Flats and has yet to decide on a use for the agricultural land. PAAC is interested in any initiative to start planning the use of some of the most suitable agricultural land for food production and to help new growers on Panama Flats.

The Saanich Agriculture and Food Security Plan currently being developed makes reference to Panama Flats in its Objectives and Actions.

Saanich Council was asked to consider the Flats as a suitable location specifically for emerging farmers who have completed their term at Halliburton Farms but cannot afford to buy or lease on private land. The biggest deterrent for new farmers is the lack of available land.

The Commission would be willing to assist Saanich in this endeavor. There are newer methods of agroecology-based farming that are compatible with the environmental values of Panama Flats and the waters flowing through it.

- **Saanich Agriculture & Food Security Plan**

PAAC provided input on the Saanich Agriculture and Food Security Plan through Saanich Planner, Jane Evans. Members have also attended various workshops and public open houses throughout 2017.

The Commission agrees this is an excellent document, covering all aspects and issues involving agriculture and food security and we appreciate the work of staff and the Task

Force in preparing this forward-thinking document.

At its meeting on November 9, 2017 PAAC considered the 71 actions outlined in the Plan, and identified its top 6, which included: developing a concept plan for Panama Flats; supporting a Regional Food and Farmland Trust; supporting farmers markets; developing a Farm Worker Housing Policy; enhancing pollinator habitats in parks and boulevards and permit edible landscaping, and finally, to update the Climate Adaptation Plan and Climate Action Plan to enhance the resiliency of the local food system.

We look forward to seeing the recommended Actions in this Plan brought to fruition.

Guest Speakers & Presentations at PAC meetings during 2017

- Dr. Lora Morandin: Pollinator Initiative, February 2017
- Dr. Shannon Berch: Mediterranean Truffles, March 2017
- Nitya Harris: Enhancing Co-existence for large carnivores and farmers, March 2017
- Larry Kimmett, BC Farms & Food: Farmland Economic Initiative, March 2017
- Mike Badry, Conservation Officer, Ministry of Environment: Carnivores, April 2017
- Jesse Howardson, CR-Fair: Farm Gleaning, May 2017
- Bruce Greig, Planner, Central Saanich: Maber Flats Deposit of Fill Application, June 2017
- Ben Bowker, Saanich Public Works: Cumberland Weir, September, 2017
- John & Brian Bergland (land owners), Maber Flats, September, 2017
- John Manson, Central Saanich Engineer: Maber Flats, September 2017
- Aida Mashari: Linking Farmers to Land, October 2017
- Jane Evans, Saanich Planner: Saanich Agriculture and Food Strategy, November 2017

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (Sub-Committee Reports)

Note: most of the original objectives in the 1997 report have now been met.

The **1997 Agricultural Strategy Report for the Saanich Peninsula** set forth a number of recommendations designed to promote the sustainability of agriculture on the Peninsula, and was the basis for the formation of PAAC. Consistent with the recommendations of the Strategy Report, the Commission has four working sub-committees focused on implementing strategic objectives for:

- > **Farm Economics - Terry Michell**
- > **Agricultural Land Base - Phil Christie**
- > **Education and Outreach - Linda Geggie**
- > **Water - Michael Doehnel**

Although a voting member of the Commission chairs a strategic sub-committee, membership may include other Commission members, non-voting Commission representatives, and associates. From time to time, outside expert and/or professional opinions are sought. Below are reports from the sub-committee Chairs:

FARM ECONOMICS – Terry Michell

Weather and Water:

Spring till June cool and wet, planting delayed, transplants could not go in to the wet fields, poor pollination for tree fruits. To combat the wet spring fields and fertilization some farmers used helicopters to apply fertilizers. Summer to mid-summer dry, lower rainfall; more irrigation was required and hence more water costs.

Hay:

Generally good, variability in success with the first cuts as this was a wetter period; drying was a concern. The 2nd and 3rd cuts were better, but the lower rainfall made the yields lower unless a farmer irrigated. Fortunately, prices were up over 2016 rates.

Grain:

Barley was good, and now local brewers are using our malting barley and consumers like the idea of local grains in their beer. Spring planting was delayed. Oats and wheat were good and had strong sales for the local bakery industry. Residual straw was baled and had strong sales.

Berries:

Strawberries came on quickly and were soon over, but were of good quality and sales were brisk. Rubus species of loganberries, raspberries, tayberries and blackberries were pollinated well in the warmer month of May and produced and sold well. Quite a few berries were frozen for the winter sales period. The SWD Spotted Wing Drosophila fruit fly damage was low to very low this year.



Trees:

Apple trees had very poor pollination this year due, again due to the cold wet April pears and quince seemed to do reasonably. Some farmers experienced a lot of codling moth this year.

Lettuce, spinach, greens & kale:

Due to the cool, damp weather, spring lettuce, spinach and kale germinated and grew well, and right through the summer.

Winter crops, brassicas:

Cabbages, broccoli, Brussels sprouts all did well this year due to the wet spring and fall rains. There were a lot of weeds this year, much hand weeding was carried out.

Allium vegies; onions, leeks & garlic,

Transplanted onions like the sweet Walla Walla did very well, but the wet spring caused concerns with farmers having to store transplants or find some high and drier ground to plant. Once the rains stopped and fields dried out, transplants could then go in. The over-wintering allium varieties from seed did quite poorly and growers had to wait longer into early summer. Leeks did very well and there are still excellent fields of leeks available into 2018. Garlic had a very good year with good local demand and sales and many growers now producing variable amounts of garlic – as a good cash crop.

Root crops; carrots, parsnips & beets,

Carrots, parsnips and beets all had good germination and grew well, they had strong 'local' sales.

Squash:

Squash grew very well this year; the local market as well as large store demand was strong. Pumpkins were again a hit with many families coming the farms to pick over the fields. Large bins of pumpkins are sold to grocery stores.

Corn:

The cool wet spring delayed planting considerably as fields were saturated. Early attempts to plan resulted in tractors rutting and compacting the fields. Planting started in the second and third weeks of April - which was late - resulting in growers missing the valuable July 'retail' sales period. The conditions were worse (wetter) for the Fraser Valley. The August production and sales were good and it lasted into late September, with no frost until mid-October.

Grapes and wine:

The past year 2017 was excellent for growing grapes, the sugar content in the grapes was high, and they did not have to add sugar to the wine process. The volume and quality of the grapes was also excellent. (Information provided by *Dragon Fly Winery*)



Local Beef, Pork, Eggs, Chicken and Lamb:

All locally produced meat products are selling well. Frozen product is available at many farms. Processed meats such as sausages also sell very well. Locally grown eggs are selling at higher prices with reasonable demand despite many producers within the CRD.

Notes:

A BC government programme aimed at using good produce that may be marked or not in perfect form has been established to supply kitchens for people in need. The programme uses a strategy of paying farmers less but at the same time providing the supplier or farmer with a tax credit.

Buying trends: all produce which is produced and labelled 'Local' now has strong sales from the box and farm gate sales methods, but also from the grocery stores.

Organically grown produce is of high quality is in strong demand, more growers are entering the market.

Other more recent sales avenues include bulk buying from restaurants, barley for malting with local brewers, bulk berry buying for jam makers, and raspberries for specialty local beer making. North Saanich, Aylard's dairy is moving to a new robotic milking parlor, a first for the CRD.

AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE: Phil Christie

The Agricultural Land Base sub-committee is continuing to review and monitor land issues and opportunities with a view to encourage and support increased farming activity. Several of these issues and opportunities have recently been identified by PAAC as being significant to the needs of agriculture in our area and in fact most of the province.

Expansion of the farming base on Vancouver Island by increasing the amount of land farmed within the existing ALR:

Improved support for the expansion of existing farms and development of new farms on the large areas of undeveloped Agricultural Land Reserve on Vancouver Island. This could be done by identifying the areas with the best potential and then instituting programs for the purchase and leasing of new farmlands and the expansion and improvement of existing farms. Expanded

marketing programs as well as soil improvement initiatives such as assistance with liming, organic matter and other soil ameliorants would greatly assist the farm communities.

Support for farm water supplies:

Farm water supplies are heavily subsidized by all water using tax payers in the CRD. Some municipalities are looking into supplying subsidized water rates only for food growing in order to control the exponentially increasing subsidy costs.

We plan to ask the Minister of Agriculture at a meeting early in 2018 if the provincial government would consider annual subsidies to water districts and regional districts like the CRD to ensure that water rates for farmers are maintained at reasonable levels.

Any new program should also look at ways to support food growers with studies that help with water saving initiatives, water use education, increasing local water dugout storage capacity and developing agricultural land use plans. These types of plans could indicate what farms are using CRD water and could then be modeled to determine if the water is being used efficiently.

Increased support for emerging new crops

There are many emerging new crops that should be further supported with funding for research and initial start-up operations. These include crops as diverse as grains and truffles.

The small but growing grain farms on Vancouver Island require help with storage, cleaning, grading equipment and land preparation. Truffles have been researched for many years now and they are having some production successes (*see minutes March 2017*). This initiative will need more support from both Ministry of Agriculture extension staff and research.

Applications for deposit of fill within the ALR

This continues to be of serious concern to PAAC. Applications to place fill in low lying, often organic soil areas, can seriously compromise both the hydrology of these areas as well as these highly productive farmlands. In some cases the organic soils are being removed or covered when we need to keep these very fertile class 1 & 2 soils in food production.

The development of cannabis farms

While potentially good for government tax coffers, the development of cannabis farms has raised concerns about the potential to affect the availability of farmlands since the demand for

cannabis growing lands is driving up the price of farmland on Vancouver Island, especially in the Peninsula and surrounding area.

Drainage concerns

Local farmers continued to have concerns with flooding and drainage issues at both **Martindale Flats** and **Maber Flats** through 2017.

Considerable progress was made towards a solution on **Maber Flats** where ditch and culvert maintenance has dramatically improved the ability to control the water table. Both PAAC and the local agricultural advisory committee expressed serious reservations about the proposed plans to build a retention pond. The municipality has since issued a request for proposals to look at other water management systems such as one way flow valves and other measures.

Central Saanich has, in the meantime, also completed work on the main drainage ditch as well as some culvert clearing that has improved the drainage of the flats.

In response to requests by farmers in the **Martindale Flats** area in 2016, PAAC requested both Central Saanich and Saanich to support an initiative to help resolve the longstanding flooding issues (*see 2016 annual report*). This request resulted in both councils agreeing that they would work toward the establishment of an *Integrated Water Management Plan* for the area.

The work on this initiative continues by staff in both municipalities. In general, PAAC believes that these types of low-lying historically farmed areas need to be engineered and planned in a comprehensive manner so that that local governments can be fully prepared to make appropriate decisions in support of farming activities.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION: Linda Geggie

While the PAAC enjoyed many speakers over the course of the year to increase our understanding of key issues or learn about new topics, we also worked to support broader public and farmer education and training efforts.

The Education Committee worked with partner organizations to undertake a number of activities including the Farmer2Farmer Conference, the Saanich Fair, and held a successful session on pollinators with the Pollinator Partnership.

Farmer2Farmer

PAAC members participated in the Farmer2Farmer Advisory team that developed the Farmer2Farmer programme. Farmer2Farmer (F2F) 2017 was held on March 2 at the Saanich Fairgrounds. 150 farmers attended from throughout Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, as well as from the Mainland. Exhibitor organizations also attended, bringing information and business services from seeds, to finance to farm safety. PAAC displayed its Heritage Farm Photo collection, illustrating the changes in agriculture over the past 80+ years. Workshops ranged from soil health, to bees, to bookkeeping.

Feedback on the evaluation forms about how the day went showed that attendees were pleased with the event, especially with the diversity of workshops, the wealth of knowledge shared by presenters providing important information and with the networking opportunities they encountered. A big thank you goes out to Chris Hammer of the Island Chef Collaborative for another great lunch provided to the farm community.

Pollinator Workshop – February 20, 2017

In February we held a workshop on Pollinators that was co-led by Dr. Lora Morandin of Pollinator Partnership, and Lindsay Dault, Urban Bee Farm. It was very well attended with approximately 145 people on hand. More details are provided on page 2 of this report. The end result was that a new group was formed – Island Pollinator's Initiative.

IPI continues to contribute to the education awareness on the importance of our pollinator populations.

Saanich Fair

This year PAAC teamed up with CRFAIR and a host of organizations working to promote and protect pollinators called the Island Pollinator Initiative. At our booth we had information and displays as well as book signings by pollinator experts. We had a bountiful display of Squash and other vegetables grown at Mar and Mitchell Farms. We held the Zucchini Races again this year which are always a big hit with the kids. We even had a few kids bring their own zucchinis that they had grown from the seeds distributed last year. *(Also see page 3)*

WATER: Michael Doehnel

The spring of 2017 was a wet and long drawn out affair, then the switch came suddenly and the irrigation needed to flow. Getting on the land in late winter/early spring to fertilize both forage and winter grain crops was not possible and tractors were sunk. Some farmers resorted to helicopter applications as a last resort.

Many hay and silage crops had their fertilizer applied very late but due to the waterlogged soils there was very little microbial activity and also not much plant demand for Nitrogen. Often there are best dates relating to the T-sum 200 index for Nitrogen application and things were definitely behind schedule in relation to the historical curve.

When nitrogen was applied and the soil had warmed enough forage crops responded well with good to average yields. Older stands were seen to suffer and should be considered for renovation. For winter wheat crops the resulting lack of early Nitrogen caused protein levels to drop below desired levels for bread making. Flat breads and other non-yeasted baking was not affected.

Spring planting of grain and legume crops was greatly delayed and drought stress set in almost immediately. Where there was good deep sub-soiling the crops managed well, roots plunged downwards seeking moisture and subsequently grew into some of the best grain crops witnessed in many years. Other plots had the papery look and sharpness of leaves denoting drought stress. Overall barley protein levels were elevated and kernel plumpness lower than usual but still retained respectable grades for malting and brewing.

This year several trials were initiated with golden flax, chickpeas and lentils. The stars of the show were both flax and chickpeas with 5 tonnes being harvested of the latter (I've made my fair share of hummus, falafel and dahl this winter). Of note was the excellent resistance of flax to wireworms, they would not touch them. This could be a worthwhile crop to grow in fields with heavy wireworm pressure instead of leaving fallow (to starve the wireworms out). This is only a 1 year experiment and would have to be replicated to ensure continuity of results. The chickpeas received one pass with the irrigator and the flax received none but both crops dealt well with the drought and produced excellent crops. Of note was picking and eating the chickpeas while they were green, quite the delicious treat.

Harvest came quickly due to the persistent heat, and smoke from the fires did not seem to impact the flavour of these various crops. It is expected that when the 2017 results for water usage are received from the CRD that there will have been an increase in water usage in 2017.

First cut hay and silage were very successful due to no rain showers during harvesting but second and third cuts were down from normal due to drought stress and in many cases poor soil conditions. The addition of compost would have been a great way to mitigate water stress and rejuvenate some of these tired fields. Several hay and forage fields were successfully reseeded this fall due the timely arrival of fall rains which were not down-pours and still allowed for the successful harvest of most vegetable crops in lower lying areas.

Everyone is anxiously waiting what the wind currents hold in store for us this spring pertaining to the devastating army worms which saw some forage fields virtually disappear overnight.

The Sooke reservoir was filled before year's end and so the cycle starts again.

MEMBERSHIP

Voting Membership for 2017 was as follows:

Robert Maxwell, Co-Chair (Fieldstone Farm – berries/tree fruits)

Jack Mar, Co-Chair (The Pumpkin Patch Farm - vegetables)

Terry Michell (Michell Farms – fruits, vegetables, hay, grain)

Linda Geggie (CR-Fair)

Dianne Williamson (Firbank Farms – poultry, some vegetables)

Bev Marley (The Tiny Farm – garlic, bees (honey), poultry)

Bernadette Greene (North Saanich Farm Market – fruits and vegetables)

Phil Christie (Agrologist - hay and honey farmer)

Larry Sluggett (Sluggett Farms – corn and vegetables)

Carol Davidson (Sheep Farmer)

Satnam Dheenshaw (Gobind Farms – mostly Berries)

PAAC appreciates the input and continued support from its Council liaisons. We recognize their busy schedules and thank them for taking the time to attend our monthly meetings.

The Councillors (non-voting members) appointed to PAAC for 2017 were:

- Councillor Vic Derman – Saanich **
- Councillor Murray Weisenberger – North Saanich
- Councillor Chris Graham – Central Saanich
- Anne Richmond and Robin Tunnicliffe – Representing Metchosin Council

**Sadly, Councillor Derman passed away in the spring of 2017. Saanich Council appointed Councillor Fred Haynes in November 2017.

PAAC is very appreciative for the appointment of **Derek Masselink** as the **Regional Agrologist**, who has an office based in Duncan. Derek has been very supportive to the Commission, attending most meetings in spite of his busy schedule and the fact that he does not reside in the immediate area. He is able to provide insight, knowledge and assistance on many of the issues discussed at PAAC meetings. The Commission is still lobbying for an increase of extension staff within the Ministry of Agriculture, including forage, soils and horticultural specialists – and will be requesting the Minister to address this pressing issue in 2018.

In addition to our voting members, non-voting municipal and provincial liaisons, PAAC has an ever-growing number of “associate” members from various farm-related groups, past members, and other individuals who have expressed an interest in the sustainability of farming in our region. We welcome their attendance at meetings and input they provide.

PAAC appreciates the countless volunteer hours, hard work, commitment and dedication of all its members as we endeavour to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security for our region. In addition, some of our members sit on other working groups, such as the CRD Deer and Geese Management Committees, municipal agricultural advisory committees, and take part in agricultural-based workshops and meetings throughout the year (eg: Farmer2Farmer, Island Pollinator Initiative).



In particular, past member, **Michael Doehnel**, continues to competently represent PAAC and our local farmers on the Saanich Peninsula Water Commission and the Saanich Peninsula Waste Water Commission. He attends PAAC meetings from time to time to provide detailed updates on the water issues as they pertain to agriculture. His annual report is included in this document (*see pages 11 and 12*). His volunteer time and valued insight are very much appreciated.

Administrative and Technical Support Services

The Commission is very grateful for the continued funding support it receives from the sponsoring municipalities as well as the ongoing administrative support provided by **Isobel Hoffmann**, who retired from the District of Saanich in 2012 and has been the recording secretary for PAAC since 1998.

The official Provincial government liaison is Agricultural Land Commission; it is our hope a representative of the ALC will be able to attend a meeting in 2018. The ALC does receive copies of all minutes.

Professional assistance and information is provided when requested from senior planning and engineering staff of the member municipalities and the CRD, and this is greatly appreciated.

In particular, we would like to thank Planning staff members:

- ◆ Bruce Greig and John Manson (Central Saanich)
- ◆ Jane Evans and Ben Bowker (Saanich)
- ◆ Jeff Weightman – CRD

Community, technical and professional advisers who are always ready to assist PAAC in its research include CR-Fair, the Direct Farm Marketing Association, as well as individual experts who have attended PAAC meetings throughout the year.

Finally, PAAC would like to again thank the many community groups in Greater Victoria who continue to do excellent work in helping local agriculture:

- ◆ Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR)
- ◆ CRD Roundtable on the Environment, Healthy Communities Subcommittees
- ◆ Environment – Farmland/farming Strategic Group
- ◆ LifeCycles; BC Assoc. of Farmers Markets; local farm pocket markets.
- ◆ South Island Direct Farm Marketing Association
- ◆ Wine and Grape Growers' Associations
- ◆ North Saanich Agricultural Advisory Commission
- ◆ Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Commission
- ◆ North and South Saanich Agricultural Society
- ◆ Island Pollinator Initiative (IPI)
- ◆ Farmlands Trust

Without this community of dedication and support, PAAC would not function and agriculture would not have the support it deserves.

FINANCE

In 2017, the Commission was funded by the four participating Municipalities based on a formula established in 1998, modified on two occasions to accommodate the inclusion of the District of Metchosin and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. With the withdrawal of JDF in July 2013, the funding formula reverted back to the one used in 2012, and in 2017 with the withdrawal of Sidney their 3% share of the costs was reallocated between the remaining sponsors.

Each municipality contributes to the general administration (including postage, photocopying and stationery) carried out by a recording secretary. Monthly meetings are held at the Saanich Municipal Hall.

The costs vary depending on the workload for that particular year, although it seems that the Commission's workload continues to expand each year. Nine regular meetings were held (no meetings in July, August or December). The total administrative costs for 2017 are \$9,870.02 (an increase of \$138 or about 1.4%) apportioned as follows:

	\$ 2017	\$ 2016
District of Saanich (41%)	4,046.71	3,892.72
District of Central Saanich (31%)	3,059.71	2,919.20
District of North Saanich (17%)	1,677.90	1,556.91
District of Metchosin (11%)	1,085.70	1,070.37
Town of Sidney (3%)*	--	291.92
Total:	9,870.02	9,731.12

Comparison budgets for previous years:

2015	\$8,782.59
2014	\$8,621.13
2013	\$8,267.67
2012	\$7,618.82

SUMMARY:

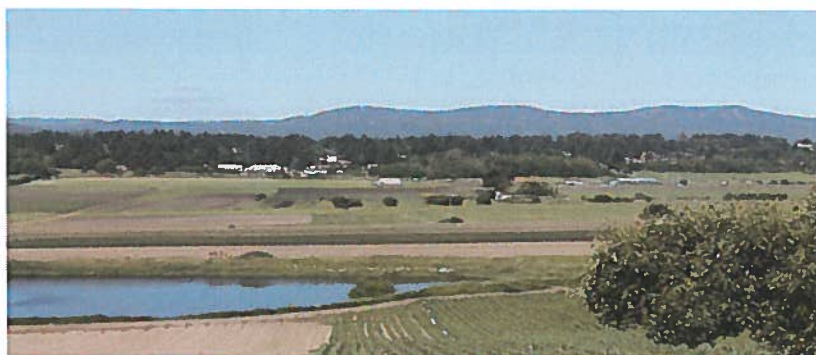
PAAC would like to continue to work with the member municipalities to provide input on agricultural issues such as Agricultural Area Plans, Official Community Plans, and other land use and bylaw issues related to agriculture, such as drainage. Hopefully, we will also continue to work with the CRD to implement the Goose and Deer Management Strategies if the programmes and the funding are extended. We would encourage the municipalities to utilize the expertise available on the Commission.

Most importantly, we hope to continue to work both for the farmers and with the farmers. Where appropriate, consult with experts, professionals, municipal staff, regional and community agricultural interest groups to continue to promote the sustainability of farming, encourage and support young and emerging farmers, promote pollinator initiatives and improve food security and farm economics on southern Vancouver Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Maxwell & Jack Mar, Co-Chairs
Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission
March 2018

Attachments: Appendix "A" - Sandown Report, December 2017



Michell Farms

