



Regional District of Nanaimo Agricultural Area Plan Implementation

Bylaw and Policy Update Project *Community Engagement Results* *January 2016*





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Overview

As part of the Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project and following Board Direction, a public engagement process was initiated during the summer and fall of 2015 to gauge the level of support for and gain feedback on potential bylaw amendments intended to remove barriers to agriculture in the region. The engagement process included a variety of methods for obtaining community feedback including attendance at three local Farmers' Markets (Cedar, Errington, and Qualicum Beach), hosting six Open House events (one in each Electoral Area), meetings with area farmers, a meeting with the Coombs Farmers' Institute, an online questionnaire, project website, and the use of social media, email alert system, earned media.

Input was sought on each of the proposed amendments from community members, farmers and other stakeholders. This report provides a summary of the feedback received from the four types of engagement: comments provided at public meetings/events, a meeting with the Farmers Institute, meetings with farmers and responses to an online survey. A full accounting of the feedback received is also provided in the following appendices:

Appendix	Engagement
1	September 14 – October 8, 2015 – Six Open House Events and community comments
2	November 2, 2014 - Coombs Farmer's Institute Meeting Summary
3	October 14 & 16, 2015 – Notes from meetings with local farmers
4	August 26 – October 26, 2015 Online Survey
5	Correspondence Received

This feedback will help gauge the level of support for the potential bylaw amendments and help inform the draft bylaws.

Community Engagement Summary

The following is a summary of the community feedback received on each of the potential bylaw amendments.

Removing Barriers to Agriculture

Should the RDN make zoning more farm friendly and remove barriers to agriculture?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	<p>The vast majority of people who commented at the open house events support making changes to remove barriers to agriculture.</p> <p>It was suggested that the RDN should increase consistency with the <i>Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation</i> (ALR Regulation).</p>	<p>General support to adopt an agricultural zone that is consistent with the ALR Regulation.</p>	<p>General support to encourage agriculture and to remove as many regulatory barriers as possible.</p>	<p>More than 89% indicated that they support this proposed change.</p>

Synopsis

Overall there appears to be a high level of community support for the RDN to consider zoning that is more farm friendly and remove barriers to agriculture.

New Zones and ALR Regulations

Should the RDN adopt new zones that would apply to ALR land and would be more consistent with ALR Regulations and allow all of the ALR farm uses?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer’s Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	General support to adopt zoning that is consistent with the ALR Regulation and to permit all ALR farm uses.	General support to adopt agricultural zones and ensure that they are consistent with the ALR Regulations.	General support to adopt zoning that is consistent with the ALR Regulation and permit all ALR farm uses.	72% of respondents indicated that the RDN should allow all of the ALC designated ‘farm uses’ on ALR lands. 57% and 59% agree with the approach of replacing existing land use zones that apply to ALR land with new Agriculture zones that would be more consistent with ALR Regulations.

Synopsis

Overall there appears to be community support for the RDN to consider adopting new agriculture zones that would allow all of the ALR farm uses on lands within the ALR.

Potential Changes to Accessory Uses

Should the RDN consider allowing certain ALC permitted uses as accessory uses on lands in the ALR?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	There was a broad range of discussion both in favour of and against some of the potential accessory uses.	There appears to be general support for the proposed accessory uses.	The proposed accessory uses were not specifically discussed.	There appears to be general support for the proposed accessory uses – survey results below.
Agri-tourism Accommodation	Agri-tourism accommodation received a lot of interest. Many people are very supportive of this change while others would like to see regulations and limits on the number of units permitted so that accommodation remains secondary to farming. It was also suggested that the RDN should not have a limit on the number of units.	There appears to be general support for this use at an appropriate scale.	N/A	78% support the proposed use. There was interest in limiting the area permitted for accommodation to ensure that land is not taken out of production.
Production of Biological Integrated Pest Management Products	There appears to be general support for this use but some concern was expressed as to what this would include such as chemical pesticides. Also some concern related to possible introduction of invasive species and containment.	No specific comments received.	N/A	Of those who responded to the applicable question 66% support the proposal.

<p>Temporary Sawmills</p>	<p>There appears to be general support however some were concerned that allowing the use could encourage logging on ALR land.</p>	<p>General support to allow temporary sawmills. Some felt that there should possibly be more limitations on volume of material and need to ensure 50% of volume is from the farm.</p>		<p>Of those who responded to the applicable question 62% support the proposal.</p>
<p>Agriculture Education and Research</p>	<p>There appears to be general support for this use.</p>	<p>Interest in supporting this at an appropriate scale.</p>		<p>Of those who responded to the applicable question 96% support the proposed use.</p>

Synopsis

Although there appears to be general support for the proposed accessory uses, some concerns were raised especially in relation to agri-tourism accommodation and temporary sawmills. There was some suggestion that these uses may be appropriate as long as they remain accessory to farm use on the property and with certain regulations in place.

Potential Changes to Parcel Coverage

Should the RDN consider allowing greater parcel coverage for agricultural buildings and structures?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer’s Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	There appears to be general support for the proposed changes to parcel coverage. Although there was some support for parcel coverages as high as 75% others commented that less parcel coverage should be permitted. A common concern was that adequate stormwater management should be in place if parcel coverage is increased.	There was a lot of discussion about the proposal and some thought parcel coverage should be higher while others thought it should be lower. There was a general consensus that a maximum of 45% for greenhouses is reasonable and that stormwater management plans should be considered.	Overall there appears to be support to allow increased parcel coverage.	Of those who responded to the applicable question 77% support a maximum parcel coverage of 25% for agricultural buildings and structures and 74% support a maximum of 45% parcel coverage for greenhouses.

Synopsis

While this topic resulted in a lot of conversation and there is some support for lower or higher than proposed parcel coverages there seems to be more general consensus and support for the maximum parcel coverages as proposed. There is also support for ensuring that stormwater management plans are in place if parcel coverage is increased.

Potential Changes to Setback Requirements

Should the RDN consider a variation in setbacks for agricultural buildings and intensive agricultural uses in general accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas?

Event	Open House Events and community comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with local farmers	Online Survey
<p>Summary of Results</p>	<p>There appears to be general support for the proposed setbacks and most people supported reduced setbacks for smaller buildings especially if it would support agriculture on smaller parcels or those with an irregular shape. There was some concern expressed with siting buildings housing livestock and poultry closer to property lines and there was some interest in requiring setbacks for more intensive uses such as feedlots.</p>	<p>There appears to be general support for the proposed setbacks in line with provincial regulations and recommendations. It was noted that a 30 m setback from watercourses for all areas that include livestock or poultry may be too restrictive. There was also some discussion regarding appropriate setbacks for outdoor uncovered horse riding rings and concerns about dust – suggestion that a buffer should be provided.</p>	<p>There was general support for the proposed setbacks. There was concern related to 30 m setback from watercourses for all “uses that include livestock or poultry” – this is too onerous – makes sense for buildings but not most uses. Also some concern regarding proposed setbacks for feedlots or finishing areas. Some concern that there should be a setback required for outdoor uncovered horse riding rings and dust control or buffers. Support for reduced setback for buildings 10 m² or less.</p>	<p>Of those who responded to the applicable questions between 60% and 74% indicated support for the proposed setbacks. There also appears to be strong support for setbacks to watercourses as 80% of people support a setback of 30 m. While there appears to be general support to allow reduced setbacks there is also a desire to ensure adequate setbacks based on the use or potential impacts such as odour or dust. There were also a variety of suggestions on how setbacks could be applied based on the size of the parcel, surrounding lands uses etc.</p>

Synopsis

There appears to be support for the proposed setbacks with some interest in ensuring adequate setbacks are provided for larger buildings or more intensive uses such as feedlots but also allowing reduced setbacks for smaller buildings and less intensive uses.

Second Dwelling Unit in Electoral Area F

Should the RDN allow a second dwelling unit, other than a manufactured home, on land in the ALR subject to ALC approval?

Event	Open House Events and community comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	Generally strong support to allow a second dwelling unit on land in the ALR. There was also interest in allowing additional dwellings for farm workers.	There appears to be support to allow a second dwelling unit. There was also an interest in allowing additional housing for farm workers.	Generally support for the proposal to allow a second dwelling unit. There was also a comment that often additional housing is required on-site for farm help.	Of those who responded to the applicable question 76% indicated that they support this proposal.

Synopsis

There appears to be strong support for allowing a second dwelling unit on ALR lands in Electoral Area F. There is also an interest in allowing additional housing for farm workers.

Farmers' Markets

Should the RDN consider allowing the issuance of Temporary Use Permits (TUP) to allow a farmers' market on land where the zoning does not currently permit them?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	There appears to be general community support to consider allowing Farmers' Markets on land that do not currently permit the use however there were some concerns raised related to traffic and noise and that a public process should be required for any proposal.	There appears to be strong support to consider the opportunity to allow Farmers' Markets through a TUP process.	There appears to be general support for this proposal.	Of those who responded to the applicable questions 85% indicated support for this proposal.

Synopsis

There appears to be strong support to consider the issuance of Temporary Use Permits to allow farmers' markets.

Kennel Facilities

Should the RDN introduce a statement within zoning bylaws that would support site specific zoning amendments to allow a kennel facility on ALR land only where the parcel is greater than 2.0 ha in area and where a minimum setback of 30 m can be met?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	There was some concern expressed with kennels and there appears to be moderate support to consider allowing kennel facilities on ALR land through a property specific rezoning. Concerns related to potential noise and with allowing kennels on ALR land.	There were no specific comments related to this proposal.	No specific comments related to this proposal.	Of those who responded to the applicable questions 55% indicated support for the proposal to support site specific zoning amendments to allow kennels on ALR lands.

Synopsis

There appears to be only moderate support for the proposal to support site specific zoning amendments to allow kennels on ALR land subject to certain requirements. However, there were some concerns related to noise and setbacks and allowing kennels in the ALR.

Agricultural Fencing

Should the RDN allow transparent fencing or transparent vertical extensions greater than 2.0 m (2.5 m in Area F) where the fence is required for agricultural purposes?

Event	Open House Events and Community Comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	There appears to be general support to allow fences greater than 2.0 or 2.5 m in height for agricultural purposes.	No specific comments related to this proposal.	There appears to be general support to allow fences greater than 2.0 or 2.5 m in height for agricultural purposes.	Of those who responded, 87% indicated that they support this proposal.

Synopsis

There appears to be support to allow transparent fences or transparent vertical extensions over 2.0 m in height (2.5 m in Electoral Area F) where the fence is required for agricultural purposes.

Backyard Chickens

Should the RDN allow the keeping of ducks and chickens in areas covered by Bylaw 500 on parcels less than 1000 m², subject to certain regulations?

Event	Open House Events and community comments	Meeting with Coombs Farmer's Institute	Meetings with Local Farmers	Online Survey
Summary of Results	Of those asked at Open House events, the majority of people are in favour of allowing chickens on smaller residential parcels subject to certain regulations.	There were no specific comments related to this proposal.	There were no specific comments related to this proposal.	Of those who responded 72% indicated support for this proposal.

Synopsis

There appears to be support to allow the keeping of chickens or ducks on parcel less than 1,000 m² subject to certain regulations.

Other Comments and Suggestions

Throughout the community engagement process there were several other comments and suggestions raised that were not necessarily directly related to one of the potential changes. These comments have not been included in this report but are available in the complete community engagement results in the following attachments.

Attachment 1 - Summary of Comments from the Six Open House Events



**Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project
Open House Events - Summary of Comments Received**

Overview

As part of the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project community engagement plan staff hosted six Open House events, one in each Electoral Area. Staff displayed a number of information boards and handouts as well as a formal presentation which provided a summary of the potential bylaw changes, followed by an opportunity to receive comments and questions from open house attendees. The following is a summary of comments received at each of the open house events.

Electoral Area	Date and Location of Open House
A	September 14, 2015 – Cedar Community Hall
C	October 5, 2015 – Mountain View Elementary
E	October 1, 2015 – Nanoose Bay Elementary
F	September 28, 2015 – Arrowsmith Hall
G	October 8, 2015 – Oceanside Place
H	September 16, 2015 – Lighthouse Community Hall

Electoral Area 'A' Open House and Presentation – September 14, 2015

There were approximately 40 people in attendance.

- Some support to limit second dwelling unit to manufactured home.
- Define livestock housing to not include feed storage areas.
- Some support to include properties in Agriculture zone if more than 50% is in the ALR.
- Want more limits on development.
- Need incentives to encourage farmers to farm.
- Support for potential changes.
- Do not duplicate environmental farm plan requirements (i.e., watercourse setbacks).
- Are Biological Pest Management Products GMO?
- Need a definition of Biological Pest Management Products and what it does not include.

Electoral Area 'C' Open House and Presentation – October 5, 2015

There were about 18 people at the presentation.

- General support for potential changes.
- Agri-tourism concerns related to growing hay for example - concern that people who just grow hay could have agri-tourism accommodation.

- Support for a permanent year round location to sell local produce
- Some interest in a soil placement bylaw

Electoral Area 'E' Open House and Presentation – October 1, 2015

There were approximately eight people in attendance.

Comments and Discussion (during the presentation)

- **Pollinators** – One participant inquired if the RDN considered bylaw requirements for pollinators. Federal legislation in the United States requires farms to have a certain percentage of the farm dedicated to pollinators. The Xerces Society initiated the legislation change, and it took ten years. Kristy Marks stated that the Agricultural Area Plan may have some support for pollinators. It seems like pollinators could be a farm use, which we could not prohibit.
- **Kennels** – The participants stated that they would not like to see kennels permitted. Kennels create too much noise, and should have nothing less than a 30.0 m setback and noise buffers. Kristy Marks explained that the potential change for kennels would be a regulation to support rezoning of ALR lands. A rezoning is still dependent on studies and public consultation, and is at the discretion of the RDN Board. Director Rogers confirmed that the Directors wanted to see the rezoning provision due to concerns about kennels.
- **Horse riding** – The participants inquired about outdoor riding rings. Dust may be a problem for neighbours if there is a 0 m setback. The participants also discussed horse training and lessons. Stephen Boogaards suggested that it would depend on the scale if it was permitted, as large groups or events would be considered public assembly.
- **Support for bylaw** - A participant expressed the bylaw looks like a move in the right direction.

Other comments during open house:

- Less Medical Marijuana Production, more farming.
- Building inspection is too strict with not allowing washrooms and kitchens in accessory buildings.
- Setbacks for chickens should be greater than proposed.

Electoral Area 'F' Open House and Presentation – September 28, 2015

There were approximately 15 people in attendance for the presentation

Comments and Discussion (during the presentation)

- **Second Dwelling** - Participants suggested that two dwelling units would not be enough for farm help. The potential zoning changes should allow for more housing for on farm help. Staff clarified that the potential changes would allow for more housing on ALR land in Area 'F', i.e., would allow for two homes on 2.0 hectares rather than current regulation that allows one house and manufactured home on land over 4.0 hectares.
- **Lot Coverage** – Participants suggested that the potential lot coverage is not enough, and should match the provincial guidelines (75%). Participants had concerns that 45% for greenhouses would only cover half the lot, which would be cost prohibitive for farmers. Participants also felt a large amount of parcel coverage should also have sufficient stormwater management systems in place.
- **Fence Height** – One participant questioned if 3-D fencing would be included in the potential changes (i.e., a double fence with a gap in between). Staff clarified that the bylaw would not prohibit 3-D fencing, and specific mention of 3-D fencing is not likely necessary. Another comment was to allow higher fencing for properties that back onto the highway.

- **Kennels** – Some participants expressed concerns for allowing kennels. Staff confirmed that the potential change would be a regulation to consider kennels through the rezoning process only.
- **Farmers' Markets** – The participants suggested that a Farmers' Market would be more appropriate on farmland rather than in the City. Staff clarified that ALC approval is still required on ALR land.
- **Wider scope for the project** – One participant was concerned that the bylaw updates only apply to hobby farms, and would not apply to large scale farming or consider the 'long term need of farming'. Staff clarified that the bylaw was consistent with the ALC regulations and Minister of Agriculture standards that apply to large scale agriculture.
- **Agricultural Burning** – The group discussed the agricultural burning on Church Road. The major complaint about burning came from Parksville, and was due to poor weather conditions. Staff clarified that the RDN is not changing burning bylaws, though the Province is considering changes to the provincial Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation.
- **Small Farms** – One participant cited a UN report on small holding and sustainable agriculture that stated the most viable size of property to feed everyone on the planet is six acres (in terms of waste management, eco-footprint). On her urban lot in Qualicum Beach, she produced enough food for three families. Currently only a small portion of people can afford land for farming. Her comments are that farming will not be viable until smaller parcels are allowed and more productivity on those parcels are allowed. The participants also inquired about subdivision in the ALR and if there are provisions for subdivision for family members. Staff explained that minimum parcel size and subdivision for family members regulations are not being considered as part of this review.

Other comments during Open House:

- Concern about exemptions for farming operations under the Riparian Area Regulations or Water Act; impact on watercourses (by lack of enforcement by RDN or MoE).
- Concern that watercourse regulations are too restrictive for farmers (potential changes in the project should address watercourses).
- Some participants expressed concern about kennels.
- Concern about residential development on farmland.

Electoral Area 'G' Open House and Presentation – October 8, 2015

There were about 12 people at the presentation.

- Temporary sawmills – temporary is not defined and allowing them may encourage logging of ALR land.
- With increased parcel coverage there should be requirements for stormwater management for buildings that cover more of the parcel such as greenhouses.
- Agri-tourism accommodation – questions about what the ALC allows and where it is currently permitted.
- Some support for farm worker housing.
- Consider reducing setbacks between two ALR parcels.
- Comments that current keeping of animals regulations in Bylaw 1285 don't make sense – limited to one horse or one cow where farm use is not permitted. This should be addressed.

Electoral Area 'H' Open House and Presentation – September 16, 2015

There were nine people in attendance.

Comments and Discussion:

- Should be no limit on the number of tourist accommodation units. Allow the ALC Regulations and any non-farm use approval to limit the maximum number of units on a parcel. Also do not limit to one unit per ha just follow ALC Regulations. of 5% of the area of the parcel to determine how many could be on a parcel.
- Support for potential changes.
- Need to support farming on smaller scale and on smaller parcels.
- Support for backyard chickens on smaller parcels like the City of Nanaimo.
- Look at what is economically viable for a farm, then use that to influence zoning i.e., maybe parcel coverage for greenhouses should be higher as 45% could limit greenhouse operation on smaller parcels that may have less fertile soils for growing.
- Apply the new Agriculture zones to all parcels that include any amount of ALR. What's the harm if we want to support agriculture?
- Allow solid fences over 2.0 m in height within the setbacks for agriculture – transparent wire fences and wire extensions are not as easy to maintain and don't look as nice.

General questions/comments:

- Is farming a principal use in the ALR or do you need a dwelling unit first? What about the new expanded uses (i.e., Accessory uses) – They would be accessory to Agriculture.
- Are we getting support from the Provincial Government?
- Where can you find a map with all the permitted uses/zoning?
- Interest in seeing economic development start to happen.
- Concerns about large scale industrial farming – noise and odours (are there bylaws to regulate? Right to Farm Act, normal farm practices).

Attachment 2 - Coombs Farmers' Institute Meeting Summary



Agricultural Area Plan Implementation - Bylaw and Policy Update Project Meeting Summary- Coombs Farmer's Institute November 2, 2015

Overview

As part of the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project, RDN staff met with the Coombs Farmer's Institute. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of and gain feedback on the potential draft amendments to RDN bylaws. This is the second meeting staff have held with the group as a whole. The first meeting took place in December 2014 at the beginning of this project.

Participants

There were six participants in attendance.

Process

Following a brief overview of the potential amendments there was opportunity to ask questions, provide comments and discuss each of the potential bylaw amendments.

Discussion Summary

The following is a summary of the discussion.

General Comments:

- It should be clear that growing of food for personal use is permitted everywhere.
- Agriculture needs to clearly be defined.
- Ensure bylaws support small scale production.
- Ensure the bylaws are consistent with provincial regulations and standards.
- Horse hobby farming is impacting farming on Vancouver Island as the number one crop is hay.
- Discussion around the difference between Farmers' Markets and Farm Retail Sales.

Number of Dwelling Units

- Support to allow second dwelling unit (other than a manufactured home) on parcels greater than 2.0 ha in Electoral Area F.
- Consider allowing more dwellings for farm workers.
- Comment to look at Woodwynn Farms in Central Saanich.

Parcel coverage

- General support for potential changes to parcel coverage.
- Parcel coverage for greenhouses – some discussion about more or less parcel coverage than is proposed.
- Should allow for as much parcel coverage as possible for greenhouses.
- Others felt that 75% is much too high.
- Perhaps allow greater parcel coverage on smaller parcel to support more intensive use.

- Light pollution may be a concern with respect to greenhouses.
- Potential impacts of greenhouses on farm land as well as energy use.
- General agreement that 45% is reasonable and somewhere in the middle between current bylaws and provincial guidelines.
- Focus should be on small scale intensive use to achieve sustainable food production.
- from an organic farming perspective you should not cover more than 1/3 of the parcel in greenhouses – use cold frames that can be moved, reduce light pollution, and extend production season.
- scale traditional smaller scale farming practices and apply them on a larger scale.

Setbacks from Property Boundaries

- Look at provincial regulations related to setbacks for confined livestock areas and reference provincial regulations.
- Consider setbacks for narrow properties.
- Support to limit creation of narrow parcel through subdivision.
- Some support for setbacks for outdoor uncovered horse riding rings to help mitigate conflicts, others thought there should be no setback.
- Consider requiring setbacks for riding rings to neighbouring houses.
- Dust is an issue with outdoor riding rings.

Setbacks from Watercourses

- Setback of 30 m from a watercourse is too much for all farm 'uses', need to be less onerous.
- Remove the term 'use' from the 30 m setback recommendation, okay for buildings and structures.
- Consider adding a clause that the 30 m setback would also apply to areas that include manure accumulation.
- Consider looking at the Water Sustainability Act Regulation
- Consider applying a density to the number of animals in an area before setbacks apply but what is an appropriate number or density.
- Ensure setbacks are consistent with Provincial Regulations
- Reference Provincial Regulations and consider explaining why a setback is required – prevent contamination of water.

Temporary Sawmills

- Support for temporary sawmills.
- 60 m³ may be too much volume – possibly consider more limitations.
- Consider adding more limitations.
- Add a clause to the definition that 50% of the volume has to come from the farm for lands in the ALR.

Accessory Uses

- Support for potential accessory uses.
- Should speak with Sean Dorey, founder of Young Agrarians and new farmer to Vancouver Island.
- Agriculture education and research and agri-tourism. See example of Woodwynn Farms in Central Saanich – similar program.
- Fees for TUP for a Farmers' Market – could they be waived?

Attachment 3 - Notes from Meetings with Local Farmers



Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project Meetings with Farmers – Summary of Comments Received

Overview

As part of the Bylaw and Policy Updates Project community engagement plan, RDN Planning staff contacted a number of local farmers representing a variety of commodity types and agricultural practices with an invitation to form a farmers working group. Each of the farmers contacted were provided a summary of the potential changes and were encouraged to provide any comments or questions with staff. Many of the farmers contacted attended Open House events, completed the online survey, or were involved through the Coombs Farmers' Institute. Staff were able to arrange two separate meetings with three individual farmers to discuss and gain feedback on the potential bylaw changes. The following is a summary of comments received at each of those meetings.

October 14, 2015 - Meeting with Marc Fortin

- General support for potential amendments
- Questions about Farm Retail Sales – does the product sold at the farm have to be produced on the same property or can it be from multiple properties? Their company owns many parcels on Vancouver Island and the cattle are moved from parcel to parcel depending on what stage they're in i.e. cow-calf, rangeland or finishing (feedlot) but they only have two stores with farm gate sales. He noted the CVRD bylaws require 80% of the product to be produced in the CVRD and that this may be challenging depending on how this is interpreted.
- Support for changes in Area 'F' to allow for a second dwelling unit that is not a manufactured home. He noted that with a large cattle operation you typically have at least six staff working three eight hour shifts (24/7) and often they need to be housed onsite (especially with a cow calf operation). Farm worker housing is sometimes an issue.
- Fencing – support for changes to fence height.
- Setbacks for Confined Livestock Areas - He expressed some concern that some of their finishing areas (or feedlots) where cattle are confined 'temporarily' for typically 4 - 6 months are currently very close to the property line for example on Church Road.
- Briefly discussed how new AG zones could be applied.

October 16, 2015 - Meeting with Betty Benson and Colin Springford

- General support for new AG zones and amendments.
- Betty noted – farmers don't want additional regulations or requirements.
- There was some confusion and discussion around whether Farmers' Markets are 'farm uses' under the ALR Regulations so we discussed the difference between Farmers' Markets and farm retail sales as well as permitted vs farm uses and requirements for non-farm use related to Farmers' Markets as well as the proposal to include language in support of TUPs for Farmers' Markets.
- The definition of 'farm use' – not really clear what this includes:
- Colin expressed concern with the proposed 30 m setback for "uses that include livestock, poultry, or other farm animals from a domestic well, spring, or the natural boundary of a lake or other watercourse". A 30 m setback for uses would make a significant portion of his land and many other farms un-useable if this includes grazing areas, etc.
- Some concern re: 0 m setback for outdoor uncovered horse riding arenas especially when there is no requirement for dust control, watering etc. an adequate buffer should be provided.
- Confined Livestock Areas – Colin currently has his bull pens, which are approximately 8 - 10,000 ft² located right on the property line adjacent to the road. These may be considered confined livestock areas – would a 30 m setback apply? All bulls are confined within this area in the winter but the barn is located 30 m from the road. There is typically grass in this area and it's not muddy all winter, it includes access to indoors and a wood waste bedding mound.
- Feedlot – feeding is done inside the barn and contains stalls, on concrete. Cattle are grass fed and finished. Outdoor, uncovered feedlots aren't practical on Vancouver Island as it's too wet and the soil becomes a mud bath.
- Free Range or pastured poultry are fed inside with multiple feeders and the area outdoors is often covered in sand (winter garden).
- Support for setback of 8 m for buildings 10 m² of less in size.
- Suggested looking at the Environmental Management Act – Farm Practices/Farm Plan which is currently under review – new regulations may be coming.
- Support for increase in fence height although noted that fencing does not often have to be above 2.0 m in height for agricultural purposes.
- Discussion re: temporary sawmills – if we want to regulate the amount of timber coming from off-site as opposed to off-farm (i.e., 'farm' vs 'parcel or 'lot') we could by looking at the amount of lumber on site that is timber marked as all timber that is transported is required to have a timber mark.

Attachment 4 - Summer/Fall 2015 Online Survey Results



Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project Summer/Fall 2015 Questionnaire Results

Overview

As part of the Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project and following Board direction staff initiated a public engagement process during the summer and fall of 2015 to gauge the level of support and gain feedback on the potential bylaw amendments intended to remove barriers to agriculture in the region. The engagement process included attendance at three local Farmers' Markets (Cedar, Errington, and Qualicum Beach), hosting six Open House events (one in each Electoral Area), meetings with area farmers, a meeting with the Coombs Farmers' Institute, and an online questionnaire.



The purpose of the questionnaire was to ascertain the level of support from the community, including farmers, for changes to the RDN zoning bylaws that would remove barriers to farming. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part dealt with the types of changes that could be made to better support agriculture. The second part focused on some of the specific bylaw amendments that have been proposed. Many of the questions allowed respondents to provide written comments which are attached at the end of the questionnaire results.

A total of 180 people completed the survey with 85% of those completing both the first and second part of the survey. Approximately 28% of the respondents currently operate a farm.









2015 Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Questionnaire - Results



1. Do you live or own property in one of the RDN Electoral Areas?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		83.3%	140
No		16.7%	28
		Total Responses	168


2. Which Electoral Area do you live or own property in?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Electoral Area A (Cedar, Cassidy, South Wellington)		20.2%	25
Electoral Area B (Gabriola Island)		1.6%	2
Electoral Area C (Extension, Jingle Pot, East Wellington - Pleasant Valley)		8.1%	10
Electoral Area E (Nanoose, Fairwinds, Red Gap)		10.5%	13
Electoral Area F (Coombs, Errington, Hilliers)		24.2%	30
Electoral Area G (French Creek, Pareil, Englishman River, Dashwood)		12.1%	15
Electoral Area H (Qualicum Bay, Bowser, Deep Bay), Spider Lake		6.5%	8
None of the above		16.9%	21
		Total Responses	124

3. You have indicated that you do not live in any of the RDN Electoral Areas. Please let us know generally where you live (For example, Nanaimo, Parksville, or Qualicum Beach).

The 45 response(s) to this question can be found in the appendix.

4. Do you currently operate a farm?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		27.9%	41
No		72.1%	106
		Total Responses	147

5. Do you support making RDN zoning bylaws more farm friendly by removing obstacles to agriculture that are a direct result of RDN zoning requirements?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	130 (89.7%)	4 (2.8%)	11 (7.6%)	145

6. RDN zoning bylaws are not consistent with Provincial regulations for the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). In order to address this inconsistency the proposal is to adopt new zones that would apply only to ALR land ('Agriculture' would continue to be a permitted use on non-ALR lands where it is currently permitted in the bylaw). Do you think there should be land use zones that are consistent with the ALR regulation and apply only to ALR land?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	68 (50.4%)	13 (9.6%)	54 (40.0%)	135

7. The Provincial regulations that apply to ALR land allow a number of uses not currently permitted by the RDN. Do you think the RDN should allow farm uses that are compatible with and support agriculture and are consistent with Provincial regulations?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	107 (79.3%)	9 (6.7%)	19 (14.1%)	135

8. Currently, buildings and structures for housing livestock or for storing manure must be located at least 30.0 metres from property lines. Should the RDN consider introducing more flexible minimum setback requirements for lower impact agricultural uses and buildings in accordance with Provincial guidelines?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	95 (71.4%)	25 (18.8%)	13 (9.8%)	133



9. Farmers' markets are currently only permitted on commercially zoned lands in the RDN. Should the RDN consider allowing Farmers' Markets on a temporary basis on lands where the zoning does not currently permit them?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	115 (85.8%)	11 (8.2%)	8 (6.0%)	134

10. Small farm animals such as chickens and ducks are not permitted within the majority of the RDN on non-agricultural parcels that are less than 1000 m² (0.25 acres or 0.1 ha). Do you think the keeping of chickens and ducks for personal use should be permitted on residential parcels that are less than 1000 m² in area, subject to certain regulations?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	97 (72.4%)	29 (21.6%)	8 (6.0%)	134

Thank you for completing Part 1 of our survey. The information you have provided will help to gauge the general level of community support for making RDN bylaws more farm friendly. Your input is important to us. If you would like to provide more detailed feedback on specific potential changes to the bylaws please take a few moments to review the potential amendments and related information available on the project website prior to completing Part 2 of our survey. Part 2 will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Complete Part 2 of the survey		85.4%	105
End the survey now		14.6%	18
		Total Responses	123

Potential Changes to Land Use Zones

11. Bylaw 500 (Electoral Areas A, C, E, G, H)

For land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) the proposal is to make the land use zones more consistent with the provincial ALR Regulation and create more certainty about what uses can occur on ALR land. It is proposed that this be accomplished by replacing the existing land use zones that permit agriculture and include land in the ALR with two new or amended land use zones. The potential changes would involve replacing all of the Rural and Agriculture zoned lands located in the ALR with an amended Agriculture 1 zone and all of the Resource Management zoned lands in the ALR would be replaced with a new Agriculture 2 zone. All uses that are currently allowed would continue to be allowed in the new zones. For land that is not in the ALR, the proposal is to keep the land use zones the same. For example a Rural 1 (RU1) zoned parcel that is not in the ALR will continue to be zoned RU1 if the proposed changes are adopted.

Should the RDN replace the existing Rural, Resource Management, and Agriculture land use zones that permit 'agriculture' and include land in the ALR with two new land use zones in order to make the permitted uses more consistent with the provincial ALR Regulation?

Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
58 (59.2%)	10 (10.2%)	30 (30.6%)	98

12. Bylaw 1285 (Electoral Area 'F')

In Bylaw 1285, which only applies to Electoral Area F, there is currently one land use zone that allows agriculture and applies to land in the ALR. The proposal is to amend the existing Agriculture 1 zone to ensure that it is consistent with the ALR Regulation.

Should the RDN amend the existing Agriculture 1 zone to be more consistent with the ALR Regulation?

Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
56 (57.1%)	6 (6.1%)	36 (36.7%)	98

Potential changes to Permitted Uses

13. The ALR Regulation allows a number of 'farm uses' that local governments can regulate but not prohibit. However, many of these uses are not permitted under current zoning. Designated 'farm uses' include farm retail sales; BC licensed winery or cidery; storage, packing, product preparation or processing of farm products; land development works that are required for farm use; agri-tourism activities; timber production; horse riding, training and boarding; storage and application of fertilizers, mulches and soil conditioners; application of soil amendments; production, storage and application of compost; soil sampling and testing of soil from the farm; construction, maintenance and operation of farm buildings; and medical marihuana production.

Should the RDN permit all of the designated 'farm uses' allowed in the ALC Regulation on ALR lands?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	72 (72.7%)	15 (15.2%)	12 (12.1%)	99

Please use the space below for any comments you have related to the potential permitted uses.

The 27 response(s) to this question can be found in the appendix.

Potential Changes to Accessory Uses

14. Should the RDN allow the following new and/or amended accessory uses on lands in the ALR? Please see below for a list of relevant definitions.

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
Temporary Sawmill (amended as tempoary sawmill or the rough sawing of logs is currently permitted)	61 (62.2%)	17 (17.3%)	20 (20.4%)	98
Agriculture Education and Research	95 (96.0%)	2 (2.0%)	2 (2.0%)	99
Agri-tourism Accommodation (currently permitted in the AG-1 zone in Bylaw 500)	78 (78.0%)	11 (11.0%)	11 (11.0%)	100
Production of Biological Integrated Pest Management	66 (66.7%)	17 (17.2%)	16 (16.2%)	99

The 14 response(s) to this question can be found in the appendix.

Potential changes to Parcel Coverage

15. Maximum parcel coverage is the maximum area of a parcel that can be covered in buildings and structures. Currently, the maximum permitted parcel coverage in Bylaw 500 is 25% in Rural Zones and 10% in Resource Management Zones. In Bylaw 1285, the maximum parcel coverage is 10% in the Agriculture 1 Zone. The proposal is to increase the maximum parcel coverage that applies to farm buildings and greenhouses in accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.

Should the RDN allow the following maximum parcel coverages for agricultural buildings and structures on lands in the ALR?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
Farm buildings and structures 25%	75 (77.3%)	11 (11.3%)	11 (11.3%)	97
Greenhouses 45%	72 (74.2%)	18 (18.6%)	7 (7.2%)	97
Maximum combined parcel coverage 60% (for both farm and non-farm buildings)	55 (56.7%)	23 (23.7%)	19 (19.6%)	97

16. In order to minimize potential impacts to farming, should the RDN limit the maximum parcel coverage for non-farm buildings and structures to 10% on ALR lands? (Currently the maximum permitted parcel coverage is 10% in the A-1 zone in Bylaw 1285 and the Resource Management zones in bylaw 500 and 25% in the AG1 and RU zones in Bylaw 500)

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	56 (58.3%)	16 (16.7%)	24 (25.0%)	96

Potential Changes to Setbacks

17. Currently, the setbacks for all buildings and structures for housing livestock or animals or for the storing of manure is 30.0 metres from property lines. The RDN is considering introducing flexible minimum setback requirements for agricultural buildings and intensive agricultural uses in accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas. These setbacks would be the same in both Bylaw 500 and Bylaw 1285 and would apply to both ALR and non-ALR land where such uses are permitted.

Do you support the following setbacks for agricultural buildings and uses?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
0 metres for outdoor uncovered horse riding rings and exercise yards where no feeding of animals occurs	60 (63.2%)	19 (20.0%)	16 (16.8%)	95
8.0 metres for buildings and structures 10 m ² or less that	57	18	19	94

house livestock, poultry, game, or other furbearing farm animals	(60.6%)	(19.1%)	(20.2%)	
8.0 metres for indoor riding ring where no feeding or housing of animals occurs	62 (66.0%)	17 (18.1%)	15 (16.0%)	94
15.0 metres for buildings and structures 50 m ² or less that house livestock, poultry, game, or other furbearing farm animals	56 (60.9%)	20 (21.7%)	16 (17.4%)	92
30.0 metres for buildings and structures more than 50 m ² that house livestock, poultry, game, or other furbearing farm animals	64 (68.1%)	14 (14.9%)	16 (17.0%)	94
30.0 metres for indoor riding rings where feeding and housing of animals occurs	66 (69.5%)	13 (13.7%)	16 (16.8%)	95
30.0 metres for all buildings and structures associated with medical marihuana production except where the adjacent parcel contains non-ALR residential uses the setback shall be 60.0 metres and where the adjacent parcel contains a park or school, then the setback shall be 150.0 metres	66 (69.5%)	12 (12.6%)	17 (17.9%)	95
30.0 metres for Mushroom barn	67 (70.5%)	12 (12.6%)	16 (16.8%)	95
30.0 metres for buildings, structures, and lands used for: the storage of agricultural liquid or solid waste, on-farm composting, or compost storage	68 (71.6%)	10 (10.5%)	17 (17.9%)	95
8.0 metres for all other agricultural buildings and structures	70 (74.5%)	8 (8.5%)	16 (17.0%)	94
All buildings, structures and uses that include livestock, poultry, or other farm animals shall be a minimum of 30.0 metres from a domestic well, spring, or the natural boundary of a watercourse.	75 (80.6%)	7 (7.5%)	11 (11.8%)	93

Please use the space below for any comments you have with respect to setbacks for agricultural buildings, structures, and uses. The 19 response(s) to this question can be found in the appendix.

Second Dwelling Units - Bylaw 1285

18. The existing A-1 zone in Bylaw 1285, which applies to ALR land in Electoral Area F, permits one dwelling unit and one manufactured home, in accordance with the ALR Regulation. The proposal is to allow a second dwelling unit, other than a manufactured home, on lots that are greater than 2.0 ha subject to a non-farm use approval from the Agricultural Land Commission. This is consistent with residential densities and site area requirements in Bylaw 1285 and Bylaw 500.

Should the RDN amend the A-1 zone to permit up to two dwelling units on lots that are greater than 2.0 ha subject to a non-farm use approval from the ALC?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	71 (76.3%)	11 (11.8%)	11 (11.8%)	93

Agricultural Fencing

19. Currently, in Bylaws 500 and 1285 a fence over 2.0 metres in height is considered a structure and therefore must meet the setbacks in the applicable zone. In many cases this equates to an 8.0 metre setback which could result in substantial loss of useable farm land. In addition, an agricultural operation may require fencing greater than 2.0 metres in height to contain livestock or to keep animals out.

Should the RDN permit transparent fencing (wire) and transparent vertical extensions to solid fencing over 2.0 metres in height within the setbacks where the fencing is required for agricultural purposes?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	81 (87.1%)	5 (5.4%)	7 (7.5%)	93

Kennel Facilities

20. The ALR Regulation permits facilities for breeding pets or operating a kennel or boarding facility as a non-farm use in the ALR. There are currently limited zones or parcels where kennels are permitted in the RDN. The proposal is to include a statement in both Bylaw 500 and 1285 that would clarify that new kennel facilities on ALR land may only be supported through a property-specific rezoning process and the use, if approved, would be subject to specific requirements.

Should the RDN consider including a statement in Bylaws 500 and 1285 that would support site specific zoning amendments only on ALR land greater than 2.0 ha in area where a minimum setback of 30 m can be met?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total Responses
	51 (55.4%)	14 (15.2%)	27 (29.3%)	92



Use this space to share any additional comments you have with respect to the potential bylaw amendments.

The 21 response(s) to this question can be found in the appendix.

Appendix

You have indicated that you do not live in any of the RDN Electoral Areas. Please let us know generally where you live (For example, Nanaimo, Parksville, or Qualicum Beach).

Location	Number of Responses
Nanaimo	24
Parksville	6
Qualicum Beach	9
Lantzville	3
Ladysmith	2
Comox Valley	1
	45 Total

Please use the space below for any comments you have related to the potential permitted uses.

#	Response
1.	I would like to see more areas for medical marihuana production as I have crohn's disease. No traditional medication is working for me and I would like to try this route of treatment and have it more readily accessible.
2.	Medical marihuana production should be limited to industrial lands. The shape of one's property should determine setback of buildings -homes, barns, etc. i.e. a long narrow piece of land.
3.	Be cautious with agritourism. If implemented without sensitivity to agriculture it could damage the long-term agricultural potential.
4.	Any type of farmer should be able to do all of the above.
5.	I will need to come out to learn more about these changes to one of the info sessions
6.	More consistency of your bylaws as they relate to land within the ALR is good. However, to limit it to two zones may be too restrictive. Parcel sizes are a consideration that must be taken into account with agricultural lands . You should look at some smaller parcel sizes 2.0 hectare minimum for some agricultural land. Limiting the number of zones to two does not provide the flexibility required to allow for topography, environmentally sensitive areas etc. In addition, not all land within the ALR is viable agricultural land. Those parcels should be addressed. Also , land not within the ALR should be considered for re-zoning to agricultural use if it is deemed economically viable by the land owner. Agricultural use should be encouraged, especially in rural areas and you do not need an agricultural land reserve with its massive bureaucracy for something that could be handled by zoning.
7.	We need more local production of food and avoid where possible, reliance on imported commerical foods
8.	The question is too broad and thus the answer yes or no is simplistic/compressive in nature.

While common sense would suggest all things agricultural must be good.

A winery/ restaurant with a large paved parking lot, at first blush seems great.... But.

While it appears and would be lauded by many, especially the business community, as a worthy contribution, it does little to nothing for actual food production/self sufficiency/local self reliance/sustainability.

Furthermore, it increases the possibility of yet another mansion being built on agricultural farm land/ ALR land, essentially removing it from small scale food production as now the parcel is over 1 million as a result of the mansion etc.

So the answer is yes in principle but NO to simply opening the gates to any form of development hiding behind 'local food' in its application.

Surely you aware of a dozen examples of this in the lower mainland?

If not i can provide them.

9. I personally do not believe horses should be allowed as farm use. I think farm land should used for growing and raising farm animals for human consumption.

10. Several of these uses will be satisfactory if there is supervision and regulation that makes the use compatible with surrounding properties. Others, such as use of soil conditioners, soil sampling maintenance and operation of farm buildings are part of the farming operation and should be up to the farmer. Regulations such as setbacks should be in place and depend on the use of the building or facility.

11. golf courses should not be permitted on agricultural land. greenhouses should be permitted on non alr land as they don't use the soil they sit on, for agricultural purposes put greenhouses on areas with soil not viable for field crops.

12. Everyone deserves the right to live sustainably, and within certain non invasive perimeters for other neighbours, especially in more rural areas, this should be allowed without dispute.

13. I am in favour of farm activities related to food production, but not sure I would agree with horse riding/training/boarding being included as this is more of a hobby/pleasure activity (unless work horses are used on the farm for practical purposes).

14. We need to provide more spaces for farm workers to live on the farmland. And we should introduce the Comprehensive Development Zoning <http://wcel.org/comprehensive-development-zoning> like they do in the Cowichan Regional District and as used by OUR Ecovillage - ourecovillage.org

15. Farmers have to be able to diversify and offer many things field to table and all the work in between. There should be as little encumbrance as possible so they can get things done without too much red tape and rules.

<p>16. Several of the potential permitted uses such as timber production (clear-cutting & using herbicides and pesticides & some farm uses on the landscape can have negative impacts to drinking water & ecosystem services that end up adding more cost for taxpayers.</p>
<p>17. This last question is loaded, but I feel that farm related, sales, production, processing should be allowed in the ALR</p>
<p>18. I believe the RDN should permit all of the designated farm uses allowed in the ALR Regulation on ALR lands except medical Marijuana production. Companies should not be allowed to use perfectly good ALR land for something so regulated. They should purchase industrial land and grow their product in highly protected facilities as Tilray has in Nanaimo.</p>
<p>19. As the economy shrinks and population spirals out of control, we will desperately need to produce more AFFORDABLE food locally.</p> <p>People need to become more self-reliant and grow a lot of their own food with perhaps some to trade or sell. A large side yard can feed a family of 4 easily. know from experience. People need to be allowed to do this and keep small animals not just on ALR zoned lands.</p>
<p>20. Depending on the space between neighbours. Things that are overly smelly should only be allowed on larger lots with buffers between neighbours</p>
<p>21. Permitted uses should be regulated by the RDN to ensure that key environmental values are protected, particularly water quality and quantity for other uses. ALR regulations may not adequately recognize certain concerns specific to the RDN.</p>
<p>22. i would live to see less residential development of farm land when farmers can no longer afford to stay on their land. In city farms are needed (large and small!) for food security, biodiversity, and educational purposes!</p>
<p>23. The farmers in these areas need much more help from the governments and reduce all the paperwork. Farming is hard enough and we should be able to use our land as we wish. We also should be able to sell raw milk for human consumption.</p>
<p>24. The description of the issue is very confusing and at the extreme may be composed to get a preferred answer. Farmers should concentrate on farming and leave other industries to do what they are best at. I can't see that we should be induced into driving all over God's creation to just "buy a dozen eggs".</p>
<p>25. Depending on if there is an application for the said property.</p> <p>If there is going to be a change to the property the neighbouring properties that exist now should have a say.</p>
<p>26. The only thing I can think of is if someone says is doing mushroom manure or anything of a "smelly type of farming", that it should definitely be out in a rural area & not in-town besides</p>

homes.

27. Since the RDN can only regulate and not prohibit these activities, this questions seems to be poorly worded. I have chosen the "no" answer because I want the RDN to bring in regulations that strictly govern some of these activities. Community concern in my area has been focussed on agri tourism and medical marihuana production. The RDN needs to make sure that it strictly regulates most of these activities to meet the needs of the surrounding community.

Please use the space below for any comments you have related to the potential accessory uses.

#	Response
1.	Sawmills are too noisy.
2.	<p>How many weeks out of the can a portable sawmill operate?</p> <p>Size of sawmill?</p> <p>Production limits will be very challenging to monitor, so ideally you could have a definition that only takes one visit from the RDN to determine whether or not there is a compliance issue.</p>
3.	<p>The proposed change to limit the number of 10 sleeping units per parcel is not consistent with ALC regulations in Policy 5 where</p> <p>"Agri-tourism accommodation uses that do not meet the conditions established in the Regulation, for example uses with more than 10 sleeping units ,require application to and approval from the Commission"</p> <p>This is interpreted that should a farm wish to add more than the 10 sleeping unit limit they can apply to the commission for approval.</p> <p>Local government policy should not stand in the way of ALC decisions should an application be approved. This why there is the 5% total developed area written within the policy.</p>
4.	expand agritourism possibilities
5.	<p>We may need covenants or bonds or promissory note.</p> <p>There are a number of cases where people have brought logging truck loads onto their property for years.</p> <p>On our narrow 15 acres, we would have our lives destroyed by such activities.</p>
6.	I would not be in favour of agri-tourism if it took land out of production excessively - in other words more than half the land designated to housing of guests and parking
7.	Biological Integrated Pest Management research could be permitted if it is carefully regulated and ALWAYS under the supervision of qualified scientists.
8.	The sawmill could be quite noisy so times of day would , if not already have to be implemented .

9.	How will the use of potential hazardous chemicals be regulated?
10.	any small production facility especially related to food should be allowed.
11.	<p>Land being used for timber production and manufacturing may be better to be classified as a Managed Forest under the Forest Land Reserve.</p> <p>The intent of the ALR should be focused on growing a crop. Agri-tourism accommodation and other structures need to be managed so that they do not take agriculture land out of production. Small facilities may be reasonable.</p>
12.	Food security on the island is needed! We had shortage of hay this year for animals (livestock and recreational), we cannot continue as we have. Change is needed to prevent further "land use" loss.
13.	<p>Definition of temporary is totally inappropriate. Temporary relates to a "time limit" not a limitation on physical use.</p> <p>Leave "all things tourist" to the existing tourism and travel industry. Housing for temporary farm workers is appropriate.</p>
14.	<p>I have concerns about the temporary sawmill because examples of this that I have been aware of over the last 40 years have always become effectively permanent. Lack of enforcement has meant that the sawmill have expanded and turned into a permanent operation that has been grandfathered.</p> <p>Education facilities need to be strictly limited to agricultural and the size and number of buildings kept small.</p> <p>Agri-tourism accomodation seems unnecessary in our area. The main house should be able to offer B & B or farm buildings could have carriage house suites. Separate accommodation for tourists alienates valuable farmland. I understand the value of hunting cabins on large ranches in the interior, but we don't have large ranches here. The RDN should either not permit separate accommodation or strictly limit number and size based on the size of the property and the quality of the agricultural land within the parcel.</p>

Please use the space below for any comments you have with respect to setbacks for agricultural buildings, structures, and uses.

#	Response
1.	See earlier comment. On a farm the watercourse is usually the animals source of water.
2.	<p>This isn't clear: All buildings, structures and uses that include livestock, poultry, or other farm animals shall be a minimum of 30.0 metres from a domestic well, spring, or the natural boundary of a watercourse.</p> <p>Does this mean that animals can't come within 30m of those uses? Or is it only a limit on</p>

<p>buildings that HOUSE livestock?</p>
<p>3. Agree with all of the above, except for the marijuana situation. I disagree with growing marijuana, in its current model, on farm land.</p>
<p>4. Again.</p> <p>Every situation is different.</p> <p>In some cases existing houses are within a few feet of each other at the same end of the properties in question.</p> <p>In other cases, the area where buildings are sited is at opposite ends and sides thus reducing potential conflict.</p> <p>Furthermore, existed flow patterns of surface water need to be considered respected etc.</p> <p>This and many other aspects point to the sometimes highly sensitive nature of what you are proposing.</p> <p>Recent examples in this area includes an Alberta family clear cutting, scraping and burning.</p> <p>Think of the soil loss degradation, followed by over grazing etc. etc!</p>
<p>5. Unclear whether "uses" in the last question includes uses that do not involve and buildings or structures, e.g. pasturing of livestock, exercise yards etc. 30m set backs from all water sources including wells in combination with boundary set backs would make many if not most smaller properties unfeasible for any livestock keeping.</p>
<p>6. Small buildings or those under a certain height could be permitted closer than 8.0 m from borders if they are used to house tools or equipment and do not present a hazard or nuisance to adjoining properties.</p>
<p>7. Our five acre farm is 145 feet wide. If we have setbacks of 30 metres, where would our buildings go?????????????</p>
<p>8. small farms need to be able to utilize their land as best as possible. In many instances they share common uses with similar small farms. The set backs are in some instances not favorable to maximizing the land, while not impacting a dwelling ...</p>
<p>9. 150 metres seems excessive!</p>
<p>10. I think each situation needs to be consider</p>
<p>11. re uncovered horse riding rings...I think there should be some reasonable setback...15'?</p>
<p>12. See comments about Medicinal Marijuana facilities in previous comment section</p>
<p>13. The 30 metre minimum is possibly too close to watercourses depending on how big these structures will be and number of animals, what kind etc.</p>

<p>14. To me setbacks of smelly buildings should be as far away from other homes as possible.</p>
<p>15. There should be a culture that optimizes the use of productive agriculture land. While the setbacks and other restrictions proposed seem reasonable, regulators and landowners should work together to find ways to increase the output from agriculture activities, while respecting neighbours and protecting key public environmental values.</p>
<p>16. Regional District of Nanaimo; Bylaw and Policy Update Project</p> <p>Rural properties</p> <p>RE: proposed setbacks as discussed at the Cedar Hall meeting.</p> <p>The stated purposes of the policy update include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove regulatory barriers and obstacles that hinder agriculture and aquaculture; • promote sustainable practices that support agricultural production and preserve farm land; <p>I express my agreement in general with the proposed changes to building setbacks as shown on the RDN website/ Bylaw and Policy Update Project. I do suggest that minimal setbacks, and an alternative to how setbacks are determined will better support the objectives stated above.</p> <p>The RDN website shows that the proposed changes to building setbacks will include an 8 metre setback for “all other agricultural buildings” (not used for livestock, poultry, game or furbearing animals). This is not significantly different from the existing setback requirements.</p> <p>There was however discussion of an alternative determination for setbacks, specifically a comment at the Cedar Hall meeting on September 14 by senior RDN staff that consideration may be given to setbacks based on the size of a building rather than “nature of use” of the building, as is the current bylaw practice. The specific comment was that a building size of 50 square metres (or more) is large enough that it could house livestock in the future and therefore the use of the building would become a bylaw infraction. I suggest that this should not be a consideration in the approval of building design or setback.</p> <p>A change of bylaw application to size of building rather than nature of use of the building will obligate the current owner of the land to meet requirements based on a potential breach of bylaw by a future owner of the land. Clearly bylaws cannot be based on possible future infractions by other owners of the land.</p> <p>The existing setback of 8 metres should remain for all buildings, of any size, not used for livestock, poultry, game or furbearing animals.</p> <p>RU4D land. current zoning Bylaw: Minimum Setback Requirements (based on use)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buildings and structures for housing livestock or for storing manure: All lot lines - 30.0 m 2. All other buildings and structures: All lot lines - 8.0 m

I also suggest that as the intent of this project is, “to promote sustainable practices that support agricultural production and preserve farm land” that care should be taken to not place buildings on productive crop or grazing land.

Building placement in rural areas should be on “marginal” land. Using arbitrary set-back measurements (30 metres for all buildings over 50 sq metres) does not meet the requirement to preserve farm land. It would be logical for landowners to develop their property such that buildings, roadways, parking or other improvements are on marginal land where ever possible. The purpose would be to protect the use of crop and grazing land. Large setbacks for buildings, where not required based on use, would likely use productive land while leaving the margins of the property vacant but not useable for production.

For example:

Our property is a two hectare parcel in Yellow Point. We have been reclaiming crop land and amending soil to expand the available growing area. Also, we are planning to construct a garage of 89 square metres which will be a cleaning and storage area for crops, workshop area and serve as a garage for vehicles and equipment.

Should the setback area of 30 metres be in effect (building over 50 metres in area) then the exterior wall of the building will be 37.4 meters from the property line. This distance will already place construction on top of amended crop area. Add to this some area of margin around a building (crops will not be grown at the perimeter of the building) and the crop area could be set back 40 metres or more from the property line.

The two hectare parcel is approximately 93 metres in width. Using the setback as discussed would require that our garage use fully one-half of the width of the land. Marginal land near the property line will be vacant while productive land sits under the building.

Is it possible that the decision of where to place rural buildings would be determined where a building will not reduce the amount of productive land? Having grown up in large farming families I suggest that all farmers would make their decision this way. It is only in a more regulated process where the decision would be made on an arbitrary measurement.

I suggest that this is one way in which we can use this Policy Update to be innovative in protecting our farm land and in support of sustainable agricultural production.

17. Its a lot easier to understand these rules when an exisiting farm is in place, as neighbours would understand and expect changes to occur on the farm with respect to noise/smell/line of sight and structures. However, changes to a property that never was a hobby or small/large farm would have a great impact and would be harder to say whether these changes would be well received.

18. As far as I am concerned, no set backs should be required in ALR lands. Farm land is farm land. Farmers on ALR should be expected to tolerate whatever legitimate farming occurs on neighboring ALR land.

Ag land neighboring residential or industrial zoning must have the above minimum setbacks - and those neighboring non-ag lands should also be required to address setbacks on those lands as well - ie. use for park or green space or roads.

19. I think that you need to vary the setback based on the size of the property and surrounding properties.

Use this space to share any additional comments you have with respect to the potential bylaw amendments.

#	Response
1.	Second dwelling on ALR land. What is the ALC's position on non-manufactured homes in the ALR? The distinction between manufactured and regular homes is relatively minor and I support removing the distinction. It made sense when people were putting on single wide modulars without a foundation, but now even manufactured homes require a full foundation. However, the ALC may not approve these so it may set false expectations.
2.	I am concerned that these amendments do not address the problem of Farm Markets that should be allowed (in my opinion) For example: Farmer #1 grows Squash & Pumpkins and Farmer#2 grows Tomatoes & Corn. Farmer #2 runs a Farmgate Kiosk and doesn't work in a job off the farm while Farmer #1 works in an office and doesn't have a Kiosk, but can work at the Kiosk next door for a few hours on the weekend....I think they should be allowed to 'share' a sales location on Farm #2
3.	don't go nearly far enough
4.	In the extension area as well as many other ALR area. There is larger property that should be able to be pulled out of ALR because of the quality of soil and lack of agricultural benefits for these properties.
5.	Having to go to the ALC for approval of a second dwelling unit is a non starter - Very difficult to obtain their approvals - the ALC believes this is contrary to enhancing agricultural use. The ALC is the largest stumbling block to any of these proposed bylaw changes. They should be implemented and even less restrictive agricultural uses should be put in place but you will run into a dysfunctional ministry with the ALC
6.	<p>Re. Kennels.</p> <p>A kennel on a 5 acre property, densely treed is far less invasive than being on 10 20 even 50 acres.</p> <p>In Cedar on the other side of Michael lake there was a kennel/puppy mill.</p> <p>The noise of the barking drifting across the lake 24/7, especially at night with no 'white noise' was maddening.</p> <p>Again, ever situation is different.</p>

<p>You need a committee that helps with this process, much like a board of variance committee.</p>
<p>7. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my feedback on agricultural practice in the RDN.</p>
<p>8. Thank you for thinking about agriculture in the RDN. Thanks for allowing my feedback.</p>
<p>9. At a time when the cost of land, infrastructure and services necessary to carry out agricultural activities is so high that it is nearly impossible to make a living wage from agriculture, farmers need the greatest possible regulatory flexibility to allow them to continue farming while subsidizing the farming activities from other sources of income. This must be balanced with the overriding need to protect farm land and the environment from degradation and preserve it for the long term future. The desire of purely residential property owners in rural areas to be insulated from visual and noise impacts related to farming activities must be considered secondary.</p> <p>It is important to bear in mind that in our district, much of the farmland is suitable for livestock production only, soils not being good enough for a lot of plant crop agriculture. If regulatory requirements for livestock agriculture are such that they can only be met on fairly large properties (e.g. the combinations of various set-back requirements to boundaries and water sources) then minimum property sizes for properties in agricultural zones MUST reflect that. 5 acres parcels may be too small.</p> <p>Conflicts with other regulation are also problematic for farmers, particularly on smaller properties. E.g. the attitudes of the assessment officers requiring maximum land use to assign "farm status". It is not acceptable to require farmers to have set-backs for by-law purposes, buffer zones for environmental protection but to deny them farm status for land that does not have livestock on it at high densities year-round.</p>
<p>10. I greatly support the proposed changes to the RDN's agricultural zoning. As an owner of a larger farm I am especially pleased to see agritourism opportunities coming to Area F.</p>
<p>11. In order to encourage more participation in agriculture we do need to increase available housing on ALR lands.</p> <p>We need to improve the regulations for retired farmers and allow for simply holding land with farm status without the production presently required.</p> <p>If these lands can be held without production but maintained by a retired owner/farmer we increase the possibility of that land coming into production later. Also, it makes it possible for retiring farmers to stay in their homes without considering rezoning and subdivision of valuable farm land.</p>
<p>12. I am very concerned about the 30 meter setback. If at sometime in the future we have to rebuild our barn or other outbuildings, we have no where to build as our property is only 145 feet wide. Then what happens to our farm land??????</p>
<p>13. as far as breeding goes special licence and a whole lot of land would be needed , the noise</p>

would surely be an issue for neighbours and traffic increases , therefore they should have th right to appeal if a said facility was intended .

14. I am a young organic farmer. I would like to see more land available to access for young people to farm. Currently wealthy landowners who do not use their land for food production are unconsciously hoarding land and it is very difficult for a local food systems movement to really take off on the island. Substantial land reform needs to occur in order to meet the pressing need to provide local food to our communities. The benefits to local food production are a key antidote to the harmful market consumerism that is plaguing our human and planetary dignity.
15. Many new farmers are on small parcels (such as myself). I need to maximize/capitalize every square inch to make it profitable. Anything that allows for more ease of use and opens opportunity to diversification is welcome.
16. Organic agriculture is different from agriculture that uses chemicals to achieve growth and pest protection. This should be regulated in the bylaws, to include areas of the RDN that are "organic friendly" zones. A non-organic neighbour can wreck havoc with an organic crop.
17. Kennels should not be allowed on ALR.
18. Hopefully, these amendments will act as incentives to more effective agriculture activities rather than restrictions. They appear to do that.
19. food security is a resl issue on the island. We need to address this through our local governance! Thank you.
20. The survey questions are constructed to get the answer that somebody wants. Space should have been provided within the questions to elicit comments. Answering with yes, no, unsure doesn't tell the whole story - especially "unsure". When giving the latter answer the respondent should have been prompted to explain.
21. This is a comment with respect to the second dwelling. The most successful inter-generational farms in this area are ones with 2 or 3 separate dwellings. We need to allow the 2nd and even 3rd home on farms to facilitate inter-generational transfer and different generations working the farms. However, I understand the ALC's concern that these 2nd dwellings lead to justification for subdivision so we must not support applications for subdivision based on the fact that there are more than 2 dwellings.

Attachment 5 - Correspondence Received

Marks, Kristy

From: Thompson, Paul
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2015 4:01 PM
To: Marks, Kristy
Subject: Comments on Ag Bylaws

Kristy,

Sharon Bennet (250-754-5900) who lives in Electoral Area C has submitted the following comments:

- She is in favour of having different setbacks for different buildings/farm uses; the current setbacks are difficult to meet for irregular shaped lots; she is in favour of smaller setbacks
- She has concerns about where the development permits apply and feels that parcels that are split zoned with a portion in the ALR should not have to go through DP process
- She would like to see a detailed assessment of the soil capability in the ALR for the purpose of identifying lands that are not good for farming being removed from the ALR
- She also has concerns about the effect of the new Water Sustainability Act on Agriculture, eg. animals drinking directly out of lakes
- Would like to be notified if there are any zoning changes on her property

Paul Thompson, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Long Range Planning
Regional District of Nanaimo
Tel: 250-390-6510
Email: pthompson@rdn.bc.ca



Please don't print this email unless you really have to

Marks, Kristy

From: Simpson, Courtney
Sent: Monday, September 21, 2015 2:33 PM
To: Marks, Kristy
Subject: FW: Agri-tourism language changes

From: Bill Veenhof [<mailto:Bill.Veenhof@shaw.ca>]
Sent: Saturday, September 19, 2015 1:13 PM
To: Keller, Greg
Cc: Simpson, Courtney
Subject: Fwd: Agri-tourism language changes

Bill Veenhof
Director, Area H
778-424-2810

Follow me on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Re-elect-Bill-Veenhof-for-RDN-Area-H/601034586674892>

Begin forwarded message:

From: Paul Christensen <pineridgefarm@me.com>
Subject: Agri-tourism language changes
Date: September 16, 2015 at 7:03:18 PM PDT
To: Bill Veenhof <Bill.Veenhof@shaw.ca>

Hi Bill

As discussed tonight at the Community Hall.

The draft proposed changes to "amend existing language to introduce a limit of one agri-tourism accommodation sleeping unit per hectare to a maximum of 10 per parcel" as outlined in Potential changes to Bylaw 500 <http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wplD=3514#1> is to prohibitive in our view as agritourism drives the growth of the farming portion of our business.

An alternative proposed language should revolve around existing language set out by the ALC as "a maximum limit of 10 sleeping units per parcel unless otherwise approved by the Agricultural Land Commission"

Here is a link to the ALC policy http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alc/DownloadAsset?assetId=03739D20E6D74F8899D639D36854A533&filename=policy_5_agritourism_accommodation.pdf

If the RDN planners are concerned about small rRV parks springing up everywhere then section 3 of the ALC Policy 5 in the link above should more than satisfy their worries.

Thanks for your on-going support.

Regards

Paul Christensen
PineRidge RV Park and Farm Market
250-619-8047 C
250-757-8855 H
www.pineridgefarm.ca
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/PineRidge-Farm/149980301712099?ref=ts&fref=ts>

Marks, Kristy

From: Bev Voigt <Bev@BevVoigt.com>
Sent: Friday, October 09, 2015 5:08 PM
To: agriculture
Subject: RE: RDN - Zoning not conducive to Agriculture

Message from Bev Voigt, REALTOR



Hello Kristy and other Planners:

I attended the Agricultural meeting last evening. Further to the conversation about the RS1 zoning in Area F; I would like to express my opinion that this zoning is 'flawed' in its non-acceptance of Agricultural uses which involve Livestock.

As has been explained to me by staff at the RDN; a home-owner is only allowed ONE cow or horse or donkey... in this zoning (if they have more than 1 ha) None, if they have less than 1 ha. If we are to promote Agricultural activities in Area F; then changes are needed. I now have a client interested in a 6.78 acre parcel at 1058 Corcan Road. From what I can see – it is zoned R-2 so they will be restricted to one horse or cow... this is not realistic and if people were to have the one animal it would not be healthy for them. I have significant experience with horses and know that horses and cows are 'herd animals' and depend on each other for a feeling of safety and require the interaction. It is cruel and unnatural for them to be without their herd

I would like to see the properties have 'Agriculture' as a permitted use and keep it in line with the properties covered under Bylaw 500; rather than be restricted. It seems that in Area F the Zoning pendulum has swung too far and will affect Agriculture in a time when heading toward 'Island self-sufficiency' is an honorable goal.

If you must restrict the number of animals; I would suggest one 'full-size' livestock animal per acre on parcels of one acre to five acres. After five acres it would be at the owner's discretion as it is in other areas. You have enough other regulations which will take care of the treatment of manure; and if not – then address this 'as the issue' and put that plan in place.

I am certain there would be significant protest if people 'actually realized' that this Zoning Restriction exists; as 'it is' – it takes significant effort to 'discover it'.

I hope you will see fit to make the necessary adjustments.

Respectfully,

Bev Voigt, REALTOR

Sutton Whitecap Realty

Box 596, 135 Alberni Hwy.

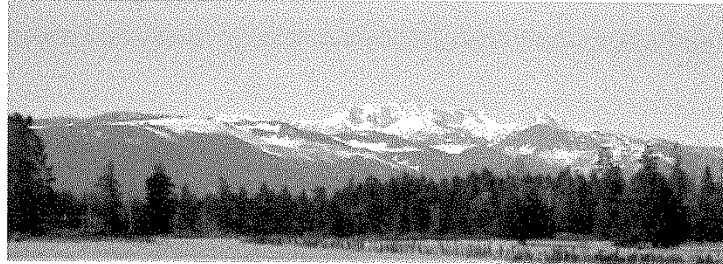
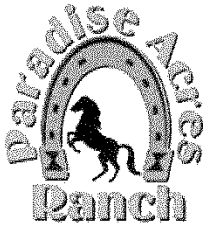
Parksville, BC

V9P 2G6

CALL 'Direct to cell phone' in Parksville: 250-248-4143 Nanaimo: 250-740-5670

Marks, Kristy

From: Bev Voigt <Bev@BevVoigt.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2015 1:16 PM
To: agriculture
Subject: AGRICULTURAL PLAN
Attachments: policy_9_ALC Additional_residences_for_farm_use.pdf



1085 Paradise Place, Nanoose Bay, BC V9P 9A4, 250-248-6125

Hello Kristy and other Staff:

Thanks for holding the public meetings regarding your proposed changes. It seems that some things have changed since the process began:

- 1) Limiting stays to '30 days' whereas the initial plan was 90 days and is in line with ALC Rules. If you wish to 'align' then consistency is key. If you would like us to 'do our farming' 'allow us the time' rather than creating a cumbersome task with the Rentals... managing 90 day stays is easier than dealing with frequent turn-over in all of them. I think the idea is Great and we look forward to implementing it as quickly as possible.
- 2) I seemed that you used this Agri-tourism regulations synonymously with 'Ranch hand Accomodation'. I do not understand how the two are related?

The ALC provides that there is no limit to the number of homes which may be constructed for Farm workers – I attach Policy 9 for your information. They also allow a suite in the home as well as a mobile home for family. These uses are allowed and are NOT RELATED TO the Agri-Tourism housing – therefore they should not impact the number of Agri-tourism units in any way!!

Ranch hand accomodation is an entirely separate topic.

Restricted farm workers to a 30-day is not 'condusive to agriculture' and will seriously affect local farmers. This is not the intention of the Agricultural Land Commission's regulations.


- 3) Regarding a 'Second home on the property'. All areas within BC ought to be equal.
You clearly state that 'Area 2 allows a second home on properties of 50 ha plus'.
Same should apply in our area.
- 4) Your new definition of mobile home is too restricted and is not in line with ALC Regulations.

I hope you will reconsider the direction your latest changes have taken and return to the plan
of being more in line with the AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION.

Respectfully,
Bev & Gerd Voigt
250-248-6125
www.ParadiseAcres.jiqsy.com



This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.
www.avast.com

 Agricultural Land Commission Act	<p style="text-align: right;">Policy #9 March 2003</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ADDITIONAL RESIDENCES FOR FARM USE</p>
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This policy provides advice to assist in the interpretation of the Agricultural Land Commission Act, 2002 and Regulation. In case of ambiguity or inconsistency, the Act and Regulation will govern.

REFERENCE:

Agricultural Land Commission Act, 2002, Section 18

- 18 *Unless permitted by this Act, the regulations or the terms imposed in an order of the commission,*
- (a) a local government, or an authority, a board or another agency established by it or a person or an agency that enters into an agreement under the Local Services Act may not*
 - (ii) approve more than one residence on a parcel of land unless the additional residences are necessary for farm use*

INTERPRETATION:

The Act and Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation do not set a limit on the number of additional residences for farm help per parcel, but all residences must be necessary for farm use. However, see Section 3 (10 (b) of the Regulation which permits a ‘manufactured home’ for family members of the owner. This Section also permits a secondary suite within a residence. See Commission Policy “Permitted Uses in the ALR: Residential Uses”.

Local government must be convinced that there is a legitimate need for an additional residence for farm help. One criteria is that the parcel should have ‘farm’ classification under the *Assessment Act*. In coming to a determination, a local government should consider the size and type of farm operation and other relevant factors. To help determine the need and evaluate the size and type of farm operation, a permitting officer may wish to obtain advice and direction from staff of:

- a) the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- b) the Agricultural Land Commission.

Local government bylaws should not necessarily be the basis for making a determination about the necessity for farm help. Some bylaws may automatically permit a second residence on a specified size of parcel in the ALR. This is not an appropriate determination under the Act and should not be used as the basis for issuing a building permit for an additional residence for farm help. Some local governments have adopted detailed guidelines as a basis for determining legitimacy of a request for additional residences for farm help, in which a threshold for different types of agricultural operations is specified. In these instances, it may be appropriate to consider these as factors in interpreting Section 18 of the Act.

If there is any doubt with respect to need, an application under Section 20 (3) of the Act for permission for a non-farm use is required.

Marks, Kristy

From: Thistledown Farm <Thistledownfarm@shaw.ca>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2015 3:29 PM
To: Marks, Kristy
Subject: Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project
Attachments: RDN Ag Bylaws Project, sub'n, n21'15.doc

Kristy Marks
Senior Planner
Regional District of Nanaimo
(250) 390-6510 or (250) 954-3798
kmarks@rdn.bc.ca <<mailto:kmarks@rdn.bc.ca>>

Re: Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

November 21, 2015

Ms Marks,

It has been an exceptionally busy time here on the farm this fall, and we have been challenged in trying to get a few remarks to you with respect to the RDN's Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project. (attached)

In early September Laurie attended the Cedar Community Hall meeting, and took a few notes. Since then a number of locals have asked us about the meeting, and what we thought. We tell them this is a personal concern as farmers, and also an ongoing interest of the non-profit society we work with - as we address food and water needs for Island sustainability.

Please feel free to be in touch.

Jackie Moad and Laurie Gourlay

Thistledown Farm, 2689 Cedar Road, Cedar BC, V9X 1K3, Thistledownfarm@shaw.ca
<Thistledownfarm@shaw.ca>, (250 722-7223), www.Thistledownfarm.ca

sub'n to Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

Kristy Marks
Senior Planner
Regional District of Nanaimo
(250) 390-6510 or (250) 954-3798
kmarks@rdn.bc.ca

Re: Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

November 21, 2015

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Jackie Moad and Laurie Gourlay

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* * * * *

Some Thoughts arising from the Sept. 14th meeting,
re. RDN Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project:

In our opinion the present ALR rules and regulations are fine, and should not be tampered with - especially by the RDN or others who may be unduly subject to lobbying and particularly localized self-interest. The RDN should not be pursuing policies or allowing practices which are not sufficiently respectful of the larger and overall public interests that have been developed for ALR lands and the benefit of agriculture in the province.

An overall impression, left after involvement with various RDN initiatives, is that the RDN's rural planning should be emphasizing policies and practices that would retain a greenbelt, habitat and functioning ecosystems, with agricultural lands supporting the environmental goods and services which are essential to maintaining the quality of life, food and water, air and carbon storage so afforded.

The Area A OCP went a ways in addressing our local food needs to be prioritized, and a willingness to implement the recommendations of geography's Central Place Theorem

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sub'n to Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

(Christaller et al), would lead to many lasting benefits in the rural area as well as the region as a whole.

Much more can be said in this regard, with respect to the need to retain sustainability options above self-interested, short-term and boosterism/development promises ...but we are restricting additional remarks specifically to bylaws and policies particular to individuals and their properties.

With respect we would suggest however that it is apparent that training and familiarity by RDN Planners and bylaw enforcement officers would go a long ways to redressing the problems that regularly arise when discussions and initiatives come up on the subject of farming and agriculture. Especially as more and more urban professionals look to reside in the country, with dreams of estates and pie-in-the-sky laid-back paradise awaiting - which leads to ongoing complaints and conflicts with the demands, needs and operating practices that farmers face.

As well, as a general comment, the proposed by-law changes that were discussed on September 14th do not appear to consider the impact of the proposed by-law changes on adjacent properties; that larger and more buildings on smaller lots, adverse farming practices, run-off, smaller setbacks, etc are being externalized onto neighbours. There appears to be no consideration of the present use of neighbouring farms, or the negative impacts that by-law changes may have on such use. There appears to be a silo approach, as if local, incremental and ongoing bylaw changes do not undermine the overall goals, best practices and long-term interests of Island agriculture.

In this respect it also appears that there has been little if any consideration to similarly integrate by-law changes that complement the rather progressive and agriculturally-friendly practices and policies by neighbouring regional and Island districts. The RDN needs by-laws for agriculture so that all agricultural lands, across regional district boundaries and shared landscapes are measured by the same regulatory and by-law framework - that assist agriculture and farming above all other development interests.

And again, neither does it appear that there is due consideration or deference to the needs and functions of ecological systems, habitat protection or watershed compatibility.

Overall it appears that the stick seems to be the preferred approach in establishing regulations and by-laws; without the carrot of incentives to farming and agriculture being apparent.

Considerations that would reward farmers for the 'environmental goods and services' that they maintain and hold for the public's benefit are not addressed (clean water, trees and carbon sequestration, wildlife, habitat, etc).

It might also be suggested that making any such regulation and by-law changes at this time is premature - given the upcoming Paris Conference in December which will see new carbon tax laws and regulations; as well as the spring 2016 BC Water Act expected to come into effect ..and the new ALR practices and policies which are being proposed to address agri-tourism and accommodation options for farms.

Making changes at this time could be seen as pre-empting such progressive considerations that might arise from such initiatives.

sub'to Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

With respect to the specific By-law changes then, and the RDN's wish to see changes that "help agriculture in the region" and reduce "obstacles to farming"...

1) We have personally faced rather abusive, inconsiderate attention and bullying from the RDN this past August, as a result of our B&B agri-tourism and accommodation practices. We stood up to the Bylaw and RDN managers however, despite several threats from the RDN's lawyers that we would face legal actions for violating 'Public Assembly' laws - rather spurious grounds that the RDN bylaw officers and managers refused to explain or defend. Apparently having more than ten people on our farm opens us up to fines and such punishment as the Courts may deem fit.

In this instance the RDN, it's managers and bylaw officers eventually backed off - but only after causing considerable damage to our reputation and agri-tourism B&B business. We did follow-up, sending a letter which addressed the matter, and requesting that the RDN Board consider appropriate changes to their Bylaws, enforcement and rather intimidating behaviour. The RDN Board "received" our letter, without comment or reply, no doubt committing it to the waste bin.

So, this contemptuous and unaccountable disregard of the practices and policies of the RDN, by the RDN, reflects our experience with the integrity and sincerity by the RDN Board and staff conduct themselves when directed to enforce bylaws. It is not a pretty picture, and does not instill confidence that the RDN is interested in making bylaw changes in the interest of the public.

At the very least it suggests there is a prevailing lack of understanding, and willingness by the RDN's elected Board, staff and bylaw officers to be considerate of the needs and practices of those undertaking agriculture and agri-tourism in the region.

Quite a great many residents of the region, and farmers in particular, were in touch with us following this matter, several thousand making comments via social networks. Almost all agreed with our position - and our refusal to cower before the RDN's threats - many having similarly felt that the RDN insistently abuse their authority and are unaccountable when doing so. In short the RDN's respect for agri-tourism, and the farmers who attempt to supplement rather meagre incomes from farming, is seen by many as a joke.

2) Smaller setbacks for buildings have also created specific and personal problems for us - adjacent farm buildings, sheds and barns being constructed not where they might have the least impact upon us as neighbours, but rather as close to our property line as the present regulations permit. And despite our request that such buildings be located at a less intrusive location, the adjacent farmer uses the bylaws to claim the right to build wherever he wishes.

A complaint we raised a number of years ago with the RDN, with respect to his cattle feed lot and housing being within 25', and therefore in contravention of bylaws, has seen no action whatsoever - the practice of cattle being fed, birthed and housed immediately adjacent to our fence line continues.

In fact, at the Sept. 14th RDN meeting the farmer who conducts himself in such a way, actually suggested that the building setbacks should be reduced, with the RDN instead separately considering the size of the area which is used for feeding and/or housing livestock. He also requested consideration that new bylaws should re-consider whether a building size should be defined by the square footage of the 'footprint' if the livestock are 'free to come and go', and not

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be restricted by doors - a practice that he follows, which has caused and continues to cause considerably problems for us.

Essentially he wishes to operate a feedlot with zero space between properties - externalizing the noise, smell, pests and associated problems onto us - the adjacent farm. In our case his manure also runs onto our lower-lying property, and thence downstream into the ponds and creek on our property. He gets away with this, the zoning and bylaw officers apparently uninterested in such infractions and pollutants as may create problems for the ecosystems, water table and neighbours.

As well the new 25'x 40' 'shed' that has been built in the past year, which lies some 25' distance from our once peaceful and productive orchard and market garden, has added new problems for us. Now we are subject to unremitting grinding and metal work, tractor repairs and emissions which go on at all times of the day and weekend. This while we try to run a small B&B as well as attract farm help who enjoy the 'peace and quiet' of working in a garden and orchard.

In our opinion then there needs to be greater setbacks between properties and buildings; and there should be strict definitions which define 'livestock areas' and 'exercise yards' - with the rights and interests of adjacent property owners respected and protected.

Livestock housing should be well away from property lines, 50-75' minimum, and buildings with people or livestock should be 100' away, minimum; and more and larger buildings should not be permitted. Neither should cisterns, or other storage facilities and constructions, solar and wind installations, etc be permitted to be within such distances. Nor should garages and repair sheds, workshops and the like, be able to be situated where noise, run-off and pollutants might deleteriously affect the agricultural production of neighbouring properties.

This is especially so since as the RDN admits, it's difficult for the RDN to regulate what's going on in a property or in a building after it is built, or the farm is sold to another person.

Smaller setbacks and more relaxed definitions of building uses simply and inevitably lead to unexpected future uses which would not have been initially permitted.

3) Similarly, manure regulations need to be looked at, along with run-off to adjacent properties, especially as waterways are affected.

In the same way the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides need to be reviewed for their localized and accumulated impact on the property where they are used, as well as the impact upon adjacent properties. This is especially so in our case, since we operate an organic farm, and yet we are subject to the chemical contaminants and drift from neighbouring properties.

4) Kennels should not be permitted on ALR, or any farmlands - they are urban businesses which belong in urban areas.

Again in our case, but on another edge of our property, the RDN has deemed it appropriate to permit a 'dog grooming' business. What this has meant is that the operators have built a large dog training facility on their lower property, claiming to only allow its use by close friends. It appears that anyone who does business with them becomes their close friend, and such training facilities are then available to their friends/customers, who no doubt pay special rates for the permitted 'grooming' and friendship.

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sub'n to Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

Each 'grooming' day sees many vehicles coming and going, with dozens of dogs running throughout their property in the summer - along with such barking, etc as accompanies training and loose dogs. Our sheep, housed some 100' from the property line, with two fences and a treed buffer between the properties, are regularly frightened as dogs charge our fenceline.

Again, bylaw enforcement, and RDN regulations and permits, appear to be acting to favour such abuses - and to reinforce the disregard of present bylaw infractions.

Dog kennels, grooming, training and assorted other euphemisms which encourage and invite dog businesses onto farmlands, should not be permitted.

5) Suggestion was made at the September 14th RDN meeting that there have been overtures and requests to permit biological pest-control production facilities to be located on ALR.

This proposal, to allow biological pest-control production facilities to be located on ALR, is more than a little disturbing, and could lead to exceptional problems should 'misadventure' occur in the production or inadvertent release of such products. Rural lands, 'away from people', should not be regarded a convenient place to locate noxious, potentially dangerous or other suspect industrial and business enterprises that would not be safely welcomed in an urban setting.

As well, should we not learn from past experience, from introducing rabbits and scotch broom, American bullfrogs and other invasive species? There is no fool-proof containment methods, as GMO contamination of adjacent fields has proven. The RDN should not be entertaining such deleterious and threatening industries and businesses to be located here.

6) The bylaw Appeal process, and applications for Variance, are too flexible - in effect opening the door to development of farm and agricultural lands. We are losing farmland and greenspace at an alarming rate - and the effects of climate change and population increases that are expected in this region mean that there should be less flexibility in removing both agricultural lands and greenspace from their presently permitted use.

7) There is no apparent consideration of water needs for farming and agriculture, and if we are to get through longer, hotter summers and falls, as we have just experienced, and climate change predicts, we need to see leadership in the RDN. Ignoring our water needs will not solve the problem. Large users of water need to conserve and reduce their use, so that smaller farms and households might access sufficient water for their needs.

- Jackie Moad and Laurie Gourlay

Thistledown Farm, 2689 Cedar Road, Cedar BC, V9X 1K3
Thistledownfarm@shaw.ca, (250 722-7223), www.Thistledownfarm.ca

Marks, Kristy

From: Hewitt, Nicole on behalf of Planning Email
Sent: Tuesday, December 01, 2015 2:24 PM
To: Thompson, Paul; Marks, Kristy; Holm, Jeremy
Subject: FW: Changes to Bylaw 500 re. agricultural building setbacks.
Attachments: dogs.wmv

From: John White [mailto:j2w@shaw.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, December 01, 2015 2:16 PM
To: Planning Email
Cc: Alec McPherson
Subject: Changes to Bylaw 500 re. agricultural building setbacks.

Attn.: Paul Thompson
Re.: Growing Our Future

I am a part time farmer and have maintained farm status on my property within Area A of the RDN for the past 25 years. I noticed that you are considering changes to Bylaw 500 that would reduce the setback for building that house livestock. I am specifically concerned with the reduction for buildings under 10m2 to 8m and for buildings under 50m2 to 15m. I think I understand the intent of these setback reductions is to permit agriculture on small parcels but I don't think you appreciate the potential smell and noise pollution that even a 10m2 livestock building can create.

For example, a 10m2 (100sqft) can house a flock of 50 chickens. If these are egg layers the noise would be considerable; if the flock contained a number of roosters the noise would be significant. You should understand that certain people breed roosters only for show purposes. These breeders are usually oblivious to the noise their flock makes. And the noise is not intermittent—it occurs constantly during the day and night. To have such a livestock building within 8 metres of your property line would be intolerable. The peaceful enjoyment of your own property would be impossible.

I have attached a video/sound recording I made a few years ago of my neighbor's poultry operation. Their livestock buildings were all under 10m2. Their chickens were not well managed. It was essentially a 'zoo'. There were a large number of roosters and two 'guard' dogs supposedly to protect the chickens from predation. I have not altered the recording to enhance in any way. The recording was taken at mid-day and at a distance of 200 feet from my property line. The noise was even more intense in the morning and the evening. The rooster crowing was continuous and began in earnest at 4:00 AM each day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. How would you like to live within 8m of this?

May I suggest that in considering changes to livestock building setbacks you also consider putting limits on the number and kind of livestock and also on the number of buildings—what's to stop someone from having ten 10m2 buildings? In the case of poultry, you should limit the number of roosters to no more than 1 and no more than 12 hens per 10m2 building. In the case of a 50m2, the number of roosters should be also limited to 1 and the number of hens to no more than 25.

Lastly, each year I produce several hundred roasting chickens. In the last weeks of these chickens lives they consume a prodigious amount of feed and likewise a prodigious amount of excrement. One hundred meat chickens can easily be smelled 100 feet away. Having to live adjacent to such a livestock building would be a horrible experience—especially on a hot summer night when you would like to open your windows.

If Bylaw 500 livestock building setbacks are changed, consideration should be given not only to the size of the buildings but also to the number and type of livestock that each building houses.

Please listen to the file attached.

Sincerely,

John Alcock-White

2705 Ritten Road, 250 722 2683

Marks, Kristy

From: Thompson, Paul
Sent: Wednesday, December 02, 2015 10:58 AM
To: Marks, Kristy
Subject: FW: Changes to Bylaw 500 re. agricultural building setbacks

From: John White [mailto:j2w@shaw.ca]
Sent: December-02-15 10:55 AM
To: Thompson, Paul
Cc: Alec McPherson
Subject: RE: Changes to Bylaw 500 re. agricultural building setbacks

Thank you for your reply. May I add a few follow up points to my previous email:

1. Bylaw 500 defines a building as *“any structure and portion thereof, including mechanical devices, that are used or intended to be used for the purpose of supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy”*. It does not define an agricultural building however. In the past I tried to qualify this and the Regional District of Nanaimo Development Services confirmed in writing that all of the following examples would be classed as “building and structures” subject to the Bylaw Setback Requirements:

--An 8' wide, 8' long and 8' high chicken coop.

-- An 8' wide, 8' long, and 8' high chicken run with wire sides and a permanent metal roof.

--An 8' wide, 8 long, and 8' (2.4 m) high chicken run with wire sides and no roof.

In other words, a chicken run as well as a chicken house is a building used for housing livestock and is subject to the setback regulations. An exception might be farmers with free run chickens and minimal buildings. That was the case with my noisy neighbor. I contacted the Ministry of Agriculture about this and they stated that providing minimal shelter for chickens is not a ‘normal farm practice’ and as such would not be exempted from local government nuisance bylaws.

2. Setback regulations depend upon the use of the structure. Poultry kept for sale and profit is classed as agricultural livestock. The current minimum setback for these structures is 30.0m. If the structure is used for “household animals” the minimum setback is 8.0m. My neighbor has a pet pig she takes for walks on the road. Bylaw 500 defines livestock as *“animals used for agricultural purposes, which are used or the products of which are sold, and includes any horse, donkey, mule, cow, goat, sheep or pig”*. Some people consider livestock also household animals. Be ready for some challenges.

3. As I mentioned in my previous email, the number of livestock buildings as well as their size needs to be specified. For example, a horse boarding stable may consist of a series of paddocks with individual shelters. Each shelter could be less than 10m². Ten such shelters could be arrayed along a property line. The combined building size would be 100m² but nevertheless meet the minimum setback requirement. Bylaw 500 addresses combined floor area and floor area ratio as *“the sum total of the gross horizontal area of each floor of a building as measured from the inside surface of the outermost exterior walls. Floor area ratio means the figure obtained when the floor area of all buildings on a parcel, except those areas of a building providing covered parking area, is divided by the area of the parcel*. In the case of livestock buildings, perhaps their combined area should be included. Perhaps the bylaw should read as follows:

“Buildings and structures of a combined area of 10 m² or less that house livestock, poultry, game, or other furbearing farm animals.”

4. The Farm Practices Protection Act ensures that normal farm practices can take place on ALR land and land that is zoned for farming. It is not however a license to circumvent local government bylaws or cause unnecessary harm to neighboring properties. In terms of noise and setback distance, one government document states this:

What is the impact of setback distance on noise levels heard by neighbors? Increasing setback distances is one method of reducing the impact of noise on neighbors. There is a 6 dB decline when the distance between the poultry house and neighbors doubles if there are no obstacles in the way, such as walls, trees, etc.) If you are 1 meter away from the barn and move to 2 meters, the sound will drop by 6 dB, if you then move to 4 meters away the sound will decline by 12 dB. If the noise levels 1 meter from trucks and equipment is over 90 dB then the noise 128 meters away will still be 48 dB. Increasing the distance between you and your neighbors helps but is not the total solution. For specific measurements on your farm consult an acoustical engineer.

Setback distance is therefore an important tool for controlling noise (and smell). The RDN should be very cautious when reducing it.

5. I am unclear about this: does local government have the authority to specify setback distance for buildings that house livestock on both ALR and farm zoned land or not? Does that authority over ride the Right to Farm Act? For example, if the RDN enacts a bylaw that specifies no livestock building shall be within 30m of a property line, can a farmer challenge that bylaw as a violation of their right to farm? If the farmer can, then the farmer can build a livestock building anywhere they want. If the farmer cannot, then the local government's main (and perhaps only) means of controlling farm operations is setback distance. Any reduction in that distance represents a reduction in the ability of the RDN to control nuisance farm operations.

6. Lastly, specifying the number and type of animals in the setback bylaw may be problematic in terms of creating a conflict between the authority of local government and the authority of the Right to Farm Act. However various cities impose rigorous control of number and type of animals in backyard chicken bylaws. Such regulations are likely not applicable to ALR and farm zoned land, however if the RDN has the authority to specify setback distance based upon the size of the livestock building, should it also not have the authority to specify other conditions as well? Vancouver's regulations state:

- *A maximum of 4 hens (no roosters), 4 months or older, per lot is allowed*
- *Ducks, turkeys, or other fowl or livestock (such as goats) are not allowed*
- *Eggs, meat, and manure cannot be used for commercial purposes*
- *Backyard slaughtering is not allowed*

Why is not possible for the RDN to do something similar?

From: Thompson, Paul [<mailto:PThompson@rdn.bc.ca>]
Sent: Tuesday, December 01, 2015 4:34 PM
To: 'j2w@shaw.ca'
Cc: Alec McPherson; Marks, Kristy
Subject: Changes to Bylaw 500 re. agricultural building setbacks

John,

Thank you for your comments. We appreciate getting this kind of input from actual farmers who also live next to other farms. We will do what we can to incorporate your comments regarding limiting the number of animals and buildings in consideration of the Right to Farm Act, ALC regulations and Minister of Agriculture's Bylaw Standards.

Thank you again for your input,

Paul Thompson, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Long Range Planning

Marks, Kristy

From: Thistledown Farm <Thistledownfarm@shaw.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2016 10:55 AM
To: Marks, Kristy
Subject: Follow-up to Submission on Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project
Attachments: RDN Ag Bylaws Project, sub'n, n21'15.doc; RDN, Mr Brian Brack, dog training complaint, d7'15.doc; RDN Bylaw review - follow-up ltr, j13'16.rtf; Letter to RDN, Writer's Gathering - Bylaws, s2'15.rtf

Kristy Marks
Senior Planner
Regional District of Nanaimo
kmarks@rdn.bc.ca

Re: Follow-up to Submission on Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project

January 13, 2016

Ms Marks,

We did not hear back from you with respect to our submission of November 21st, particular to the RDN's Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates Project. It may be that other matters required your attention, and in case you did not receive it we have provided a copy (attached, with related files).

We are writing now to provide a follow-up, as new information and circumstances underline some of the points we hoped to raise to the attention of the RDN as they consider Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Updates (attached, Jan. 13/16).

Thank you for your time. We hope our submissions are helpful in addressing the needs of farmers and rural residents, as well as in furthering the understanding that the RDN brings to addressing its mandate for those of us living in the countryside.

regards,

In our December 7th letter to the RDN By-laws Department we documented how, "our neighbours have been baiting our dogs in order to advance training they are conducting in violation of local by-laws - and certainly at odds with the best interests of our dogs and the management of our farm."

We do not know if these were the same neighbours who complained to the RDN with respect to a Writer's Gathering that we held on the farm in August (noted in Point #1 of our November submission). Nor do we know if these neighbours were the excuse for RDN representatives to then initiate legal action against our registered B&B business, which hosted the Writer's Gathering.

And, neither do we know if these neighbours were the reason that the RDN representatives would then make public statements to the media alleging that we have had complaints levied against us in the past, suggesting that we have been an ongoing problem and regularly violate by-laws.

We have attached our letter of September 2/15 to the RDN CoW which addresses the RDN's allegations, and the abuse of powers by the By-law department and RDN representatives. Unfortunately, and again, we did not receive the courtesy of a reply, despite the seriousness of the actions undertaken by the RDN and the effects to our B&B business and reputation.

We suspect that the 'complaints' that the RDN brought to the public's attention, were particular to dogs barking - which we see related to the 'baiting' by our neighbours, who seem intent on expanding their dog-related business onto farm lands. You might then understand why we do not agree that by-law revisions, that might relax or encourage kennel and other dog-related businesses to locate on or adjacent to farm lands, should not be passed.

Before we leave this concern we need to also note that the RDN's procedures for investigating complaints, and issuing such 'cease and desist' orders, are highly questionable and open to abuse. People who are accused of such behaviour are treated as guilty, given no opportunity to address the concerns levied against them - to describe the situation or circumstances which may underlie such accusations and complaints.

It is then possible to allege any number of complaints, for any number of reasons, without ever providing proof that you are not making a frivolous or completely untrue complaint. The RDN then apparently can use these complaints, as in our case, as proof that the property owner is a problem - all without due process or the principals of natural justice and procedural fairness being respected.

To elaborate a little further on how this skews the RDN's decisions in favour of those who complain let us provide another example which appears rather innocuous at first glance. The same neighbours to the north-east, who continue to operate their cattle lot and feeding station in violation of RDN By-laws, also have a yard where children regularly play - again immediately adjacent to our property - our orchard and gardens.

Last Friday these children were out playing, their calls and laughter attracting our dog's attention. (The same dogs who have been baited by our other neighbours to the south-east). We have to add here that we absolutely enjoy the laughter and play of children, and take no issue whatsoever with them being out and enjoying themselves.

However, once our dogs went over to see what all the noise was about these children then called to our dogs, and 'barked' at them, woof, woof, woof - having fun as children do. Prompted, our dogs barked back, and this escalated, the children having great fun with their teasing and so on, getting the dogs excited and responding to their calls, etc.

So we have to ask you Ms Marks, who is to blame here? If our neighbours complain that our dogs are barking is it because they have been teased, and also baited by the neighbours and their dog-business activities? Should we simply accept that we'll be publicly accused by the RDN of ignoring complaints if we then attempt to engage in a dialogue, or question the rationale for such complaint?

If the RDN publicly accuses us, or others, of violating 'Public Assembly' laws, then shouldn't the RDN have to account for its behaviour? In other words, account for the use of such powers and the attempt to intimidate property owners into compliance?

We think the RDN needs to re-consider the heavy-handed and subjective approach it takes with respect to attending to By-law complaints. And we think the RDN By-laws Department needs to prepare follow-up reports when a complaint has been attended to and confirmed - along with a suggestion of what may be expected in terms of correcting the violation. And that such final reports should be available for both the individual(s) who complained, as well as those who the complaint was levied against.

Overall, we think that if the RDN honestly wishes to remediate and to improve Agriculture Bylaws and Policy, then it should first look at the process and accountability practices of the RDN By-laws Department. Changes are needed, to say the least.

Thank you for your time. We hope our submissions are helpful in addressing the needs of farmers and rural residents, as well as in furthering the understanding that the RDN brings to addressing its mandate for those of us living in the countryside.

regards,

Jackie Moad and Laurie Gourlay

*Thistledown Farm, 2689 Cedar Road, Cedar BC, V9X 1K3,
Thistledownfarm@shaw.ca, (250 722-7223), www.Thistledownfarm.ca*