

Twenty nine specific actions are proposed to implement the recommendations. Priority actions include:

- Establish agriculture support officers that would support business planning and economic development in the sector;
- Examine the feasibility and interest in establishing a “beef cluster” in the region that would include beef production, processing, and shipping of finished products;
- Establish new and expand existing training and education programs relevant to the region’s agricultural opportunities and potential;
- Establish measures to increase the production of and demand for local food;
- Establish a regional agricultural advisory committee to engage with local education and research facilities;
- Establish a regional agricultural resource centre in cooperation with the region’s post-secondary institutions;
- Provide the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands with additional staffing to increase its level of direct farm outreach and related activity in the region;
- Examine the business case for establishing a regional brand for marketing;
- Convene regional forums to review ways to partner on agriculture initiatives;
- Provide funding to support existing projects and undertake new pilot projects, crop trials, and other activities designed to increase the range of crops produced in the region;
- Undertake market research to identify the potential market for products that are currently grown or may be grown or processed in the region; and
- Assess the potential for expanding the greenhouse industry in the region.



These actions and overall implementation of this strategy will require key and timely decisions and actions by the provincial and federal governments. OBAC communities look forward to working with key implementers to make the vision a reality.



To obtain a copy of the Agriculture Sector Strategy or for information on the Coalition please visit our web site at

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Agriculture Sector Strategy



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What is OBAC?

The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition is developing long-term strategies that are designed to build economic and social resilience in the wake of the mountain pine beetle infestation.

OBAC is led by the region's Mayors and Regional District Chairs working to ensure sustainable development and resiliency for the region. Local government leaders joined forces in late 2005 with funding support from the Province of BC.



OBAC is a coalition of community leaders. We are building partnerships, knowledge, methods, strategies and a diversification plan that supports forestry and many other diverse opportunities in our region's future.

OBAC Benefits

Interior British Columbia has witnessed the largest mountain pine beetle outbreak in recorded history. This beetle epidemic is causing widespread mortality of lodgepole pine, the interior's most abundant commercial tree species. By working together, community leaders and communities gain:

- A stronger voice together;
- Capacity and enablement through pooled resources and knowledge;
- Improved economic and service synergies between communities and across the region;
- Capacity to build relationships with external organizations that can help.



What is the Agriculture Sector Strategy?

The prosperity of the OBAC region has long been reliant on its timber resources. However, the mountain pine beetle epidemic is expected to diminish opportunities in the traditional forest sector for several decades. OBAC is developing a number of sector strategies designed to diversify the region's economy and create more resilient communities.

The OBAC region has abundant low-cost agriculture land, good forage, and a long history of beef and poultry production. However, farmers are currently faced with high production costs and adverse market conditions. A new model is needed now to return the sector to profitability.

There is significant potential to increase the contribution that agriculture makes to the regional economy. The sector needs improved education, training, outreach, and expanded research. This will help in the development of new products and markets, and strengthen the agriculture community to provide healthy foods for local, national, and international markets.



Vision, Objectives and Recommendations

The communities of the region envision a future with an active, diversified, and profitable agriculture sector that is supported by regionally situated, responsive education and training, and effective research programs. The sector emphasizes food production that is sustainable and responsible; a sector that collaborates with health agencies, educational institutions, local governments, community groups, and others to develop measures to expand and diversify the industry. Using multiple strategies, the agriculture sector will be suc-

cessful in local markets, be profitable with established products, develop new specialty and other products, and grow to serve broader provincial, national, and international markets.

This strategy will position the sector for short-term growth, targeting local markets, while laying the foundation for product diversification and growth to eventually reach provincial, national and international markets.



Four objectives have been developed to help achieve the regional vision.

1. Diversify and strengthen the agriculture sector.
2. Form stronger partnerships across the agriculture sector.
3. Increase the capacity to train and recruit the required work force.
4. Increase public support for the sector and interest in locally produced high quality food.

To achieve these objectives, the following five recommendations have been developed:

1. Develop infrastructure that supports the agriculture sector and removes barriers to its further development and diversification.
2. Attract new entrants to the industry and enable access to training and education for existing and new members of the sector.
3. Strengthen the industry by increasing collaboration across the sector and by forging partnerships and communication links with First Nations, local communities, governments, health, and education agencies.
4. Support value-added and specialized product development and the development of provincial, national, and international markets for these products.
5. Increase the demand for locally and regionally produced foods.