

Learning, Training, & Employment

Opportunities for Agriculture in the BC Highway 16 Region

Farming is a complex and challenging endeavour that requires a long-term commitment to planning, learning and labour. Beyond the Market's New Farm Initiative has assembled this list of resources available to new and experienced farmers along BC's Highway 16 to support learning opportunities for the future of agriculture.

SHORT COURSES

One-day agriculture workshops or seminars are offered in our local communities, but they occur on an ad-hoc basis. The following organizations have a history of hosting workshops and seminars on agricultural topics. Consider becoming a member of one of these organizations or subscribing to their newsletter distribution in order to receive up to date information. The Beyond the Market project makes an effort to maintain an up to date catalogue of events on its website calendar.

LOCAL FOOD AND FARM ORGANIZATIONS

- Beyond the Market: www.beyondthemarket.ca
- BC Cattlemen's Association, local chapters: www.cattlemen.bc.ca
- BC Farmers' Market Association, local chapters: www.bcfarmersmarket.org
- BC 4-H, local chapters: www.bc4h.bc.ca
- Local Farmers' Institutes
- GlenDale Agra Services: www.glendaleagra.com
- Nechako Valley Food Network: www.nvfoodnetwork.ca
- Terrace Local Foods Group: www.meetup.com/TerraceLocalFoodsMeetupGroup

VIRTUAL TRAINING:

The advent of new technologies means that anyone with a computer and high speed internet can access a wealth of professional presentations from world-leading experts on farm business management topics.

- Farm Management Canada: agriwebinar.com
- National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: attra.ncat.org/video
- Vermont New Farm project: uvm.edu/newfarmer
- University of Illinois Extension Services:
webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=7543
- eOrganic Extension: extension.org/pages/25242/webinars-by-eorganic
- National Good Food Network: ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-cluster-calls/ngfn-cluster-calls
- Ranch TV, Texas A&M virtual extension: ranchtv.org

BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

Many organizations in our local community also offer short-courses and learning opportunities that focus on the business management skills, which are essential for the small farm manager. These organizations also play an important role in making new contacts and expanding your business network. These include:

LOCAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

- Valemount: valemountchamber.com
- McBride: mcbridechamber.ca
- Prince George: pgchamber.bc.ca
- Fort St. James: fortstjameschamber.ca
- Vanderhoof: vanderhoofchamber.com
- Fraser Lake: fraserlake.ca/default.aspx?PageID=1055
- Burns Lake: burnslakechamber.com
- Houston: houstonchamber.ca
- Smithers: smitherschamber.com
- Terrace: terracechamber.com

LOCAL COMMUNITY FUTURES OFFICES

- Fraser-Fort George (Prince George, Mackenzie, McBride, Valemount): cfdc.bc.ca
- Stuart-Nechako (Vanderhoof, Fort St. James, Fraser Lake, Fort Fraser): cf-sn.ca
- Nadina (Burns Lake, Granisle, Topley, Houston, Telkwa, Smithers): cfnadina.ca
- 16/37 (Morisetown, the Hazeltons, Terrace, Kitimat, Stewart) : 1637cfdc.bc.ca

POST-SECONDARY CONTINUING STUDIES:

- College of New Caledonia: cnc.bc.ca/cepg.htm
- University of Northern British Columbia: unbc.ca/continuing-studies
- Northwest Community College: wtcs.nwcc.bc.ca

OTHER ECONOMIC & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES:

- Initiatives Prince George: initiativespg.com
- Lakes Economic Development Association: lakesdistrict.com
- Southside Economic Development Association
- Bulkley Valley Economic Development Association: bveda.ca
- Terrace Economic Development Authority: teda.ca
- District of Vanderhoof Economic Development: vanderhoof.ca/District/Departments/EcoDev.html

MENTORING PROGRAMS:

Mentoring is a great way to learn from experience, gain a fresh perspective, and establish valuable relationships within the farming industry. Many organizations host formal mentoring programs, but informal mentoring relationships can be established at any time through your own initiative. The Beyond the Market program offers a mentoring match-up service specific to agriculture in the north. Several other agencies offering mentoring opportunities more broadly for business and career focused individuals.

- Beyond the Market New Farm Initiative: beyondthemarket.ca
- Mentor Me Initiative, United Way of Northern BC: pguw.bc.ca
- Youth Mean Business, Community Futures Fraser Fort George: cfdc.bc.ca/youth-mean-business
- Women's Enterprise Centre: womensenterprise.ca
- Canadian Youth Business Foundation: cybf.ca

ON-FARM INTERNSHIPS, APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORK EXCHANGES

One of the most effective ways to learn the skills required for running a farm is through internship placements. Most often these placements are intensive in nature, spanning 2-20 weeks in length, and may include living on-site at the training farm. Others may be spread out over a longer period of time so that apprentices may experience the year-round production cycle while still maintaining part-time work or family duties.

ON-FARM PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Several farms in the local region regularly offer internship placements. Most often, these farms and others across the province are listed on the networks below.

- StepUp – Hosted by Farm Management Canada: fmc-gac.com/step-up
- SOIL – Canada Sustainable Farm Apprenticeship Program: soilapprenticeships.org
- WWOOF – Willing Workers on Organic Farms: wwooof.ca
- Help Exchange – International Help Exchange Network: helpx.net
- Agricultural Labour Pool: agri-labourpool.com
- Good Work Canada – Green Employment and Volunteer Postings: goodworkcanada.ca
- Work-a-Way - workaway.info

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Farm operations provide important employment opportunities in rural communities, but labour market pressures and seasonal limitations can make hiring difficult for small farm operators. Currently, there are several programs that can help support small farm business employers. If you plan on hiring employees, consider working with your local Service Canada, WorkBC or Community Futures office for advice on human resource management, labour issues, legal requirements and strategies for finding the right employees.

HIRING CREDIT FOR SMALL BUSINESS

The HCSB gives small businesses relief from the employer's share of employment insurance (EI) premiums paid in a year. It does this by crediting up to \$1,000 on the payroll account, based on the increase in an employer's EI premiums paid in one year over those paid in the year before. The credit is automatically applied when a business files a 2012 T4 information return. To be eligible, the 2012 T4 return must be received prior to January 1, 2016. www.cra.gc.ca/hiringcredit.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Canada Summer Jobs provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, public-sector employers and small businesses with 50 or fewer employees to create summer job opportunities for young people aged 15 to 30 years who are full-time students intending to return to their studies in the next school year. Not-for-profit employers are eligible for up to 100% of the provincial/territorial adult minimum hourly wage. Public and private-sector employers are eligible for up to 50% of the provincial/territorial adult minimum hourly wage.

www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/programs/scpp.shtml

TARGETED WAGE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Targeted Wage Subsidy is an employment program that provides employers with financial assistance towards wages eligible individuals whom they would not normally hire in the absence of a subsidy. Targeted Wage Subsidies help individuals who face “barriers to employment/are experiencing difficulty finding work”, by enhancing their skills and improving their employability, through the temporary wage subsidies provided to the employers that hire them.

www.labourmarketservices.gov.bc.ca/employers/targeted_wage_subsidies.html

About: *The New Farm Development Initiative is coordinated by Community Futures Fraser Fort George and made possible by funding from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC through the programs it delivers on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture.*

Contact: *Jillian Merrick, Program Coordinator, 250-562-9622 ext. 155, jillianm@cfdc.bc.ca*