

**Planning for the Development  
of  
The Yukon Agriculture Association  
Agriculture Lease**

**Prepared for:**

**Yukon Agriculture Association  
and  
Yukon Agriculture Branch  
Department of Energy Mines and Resources  
Yukon Government**

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## Executive Summary

After a long period of pursuing the goal of obtaining a parcel of land on which to build infrastructure to support the advancement and sustainability of Yukon agriculture, the Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA) has succeeded. It entered into a lease agreement with the Yukon Government for 65 ha of agriculture and grazing land at Km 206 on the Klondike Highway in July, 2012. The YAA has begun planning for the use of the site for a range of projects, including the possibility of constructing an abattoir and processing facility there, a primary consideration being projects that had no other convenient location.

The planning process on which this document reports included consideration of more readily achievable short term (12 to 18 months) projects and longer term (beyond 18 months) projects which will take more planning and more money.

The short term projects suggested include:

- Fencing the lease
- Constructing an access road (and creating a dugout)
- Bringing hydro electricity onto the lease
- Drilling and developing a well
- Building a heated storage building for the mobile abattoir

The longer term projects include:

- Building a mobile abattoir docking station and ancillary facilities
- Conducting agriculture-related research
- Constructing a quarantine facility
- Multi-use abattoir and value-added processing facility
- Building a fairgrounds and community building
- Building a horse-event facility
- Providing a site for community garden plots
- Hiring a caretaker to manage the lease and infrastructure

The longer term projects will need to be reviewed by the YAA to assign priority to them in terms of which will bring the greatest benefit to the agriculture community for the least amount of money and other resources. An aspect of the prioritization exercise will be determining which of these components may be necessary first to support the others.

The report recommends proceeding immediately with the short term projects as funds can be obtained. The longer term projects will require further work.

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**1.0 Introduction**

For some years the Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA) has attempted to acquire a parcel of land in the vicinity of Whitehorse on which to develop certain infrastructure to provide services essential to the Yukon agriculture industry's further development. Studies have been prepared on the YAA's behalf outlining what infrastructure services might be developed on such a parcel. In July of 2012 the YAA entered into a lease agreement with the Government of Yukon for a parcel consisting of 65 ha of agriculture and grazing land along the Klondike Highway north of Whitehorse, Y.T. in the vicinity of Burma Road, around Km 206. The lease document and its terms outline a number of activities that are permitted on this parcel, indicating that "The primary purpose of this lease is to provide the Lessee [YAA] with Land to undertake various agricultural activities including, *but not limited to*, abattoir and meat processing activities." (Emphasis added; the lease document and conditions are found in Appendix A.)

Now that the desired parcel has been obtained, it is necessary for the YAA to carry out the planning that will provide for the careful use of the leased land to further the industry's development, in keeping with the YAA's priorities. To begin this planning exercise the YAA engaged Klassen Natural Resources Consulting to assist it, considering both short term and longer term infrastructure development.

**2.0 Methodology and Approach**

Klassen Natural Resources Consulting submitted a proposal which outlined the planning process, the results of which are outlined in this report. The process would include research which would consist of meetings with YAA Executive members, the YAA Executive Director, Agriculture Branch staff and Lands Branch staff. It would also include meetings with staff of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board and the Highways Branch. A list of individuals contacted is shown in Appendix B.

The research would also include a review of several reports that have been prepared over the past decade or so having to do with agriculture industry infrastructure development feasibility studies, the YAA's strategic planning document, and other relevant documents such as the federal government's agriculture censuses. It was also necessary to review relevant legislation. A list of the documents and pertinent legislation reviewed is shown in Appendix C.

A site visit was conducted and information regarding the natural environment of the lease area was gathered. The current socio-economic situation with respect to the lease area was also determined. This information was included in the Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition submission to YESAB's Whitehorse Designated Office. (An aerial image of the YAA lease can be viewed on page seven as Figure One.)

The contract also required that the consultant work with the Executive Director of YAA to complete and submit an application to the Growing Forward 2 program. Growing Forward 2 provides funding to a number of agriculture activities. This involved an application for work related to the fencing of the lease boundary – work that was seen to be one of the necessary short term projects on the lease – as well as an application for funding for the construction of an access road to the lease from the Klondike Highway, another essential short term project. The latter project also necessitated the completion and submission of a Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition to the Whitehorse Designated Office for the access road project's evaluation. The contract stipulated that the consultant work with the Executive Director in completing and submitting this form. In the course of this component of the project an outline of the process for completing and submitting a Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition was developed. This process is set out in Appendix D.

An additional component of the work was the development of a set of YAA lease use guidelines. It is anticipated that individuals or organizations may come forward with infrastructure projects which might best serve the industry by being constructed on the YAA lease. In order to provide standard guidance for such possible projects the guidelines were developed. These are shown in Appendix E.

### **3.0 Strategic Direction**

The terms of reference for the development of this plan requested that the consultant, “[i]n consultation with YAA, determine the strategic priorities for industry development that can be accommodated on the lease site.” The “Strategic Plan of the Yukon Agricultural Association” (2006) provides some of that direction. The Vision statement in the Strategic Plan says in part that it includes “an industry with an infrastructure capable of accessing and incorporating practices and technology appropriate to the Yukon situation.” The Strategic Plan identifies building “industry infrastructure that meets the goals and aspirations of its members...” as part of the Mission of YAA. In the Strategic Priorities section of the Plan document, point 4. Infrastructure Development, it states “The industry still requires infrastructure to permit certain sectors to develop. The Association will need to focus some of its energies on infrastructure development. There is support from producers for acquisition of land and construction of a “value-added” processing facility. There continues to be support for an agriculture multi-use facility to accommodate events such as the Klondike Harvest Fair, auctions, and horse-and-rider events.”

In the Plan Implementation section of the Strategic Plan document, under the heading of point 4., Infrastructure Development, the Goal is “To assist in establishing the infrastructure needed for the industry to develop to its full potential. “ Under this Goal there are two Objectives, those

being a Value-added Processing Facility – “1. Develop and carry out a strategy to obtain land, design and construct a facility” with value-added processing and other capacity. The second objective had the heading of Agriculture Multi-use Facility – “2. Continue to pursue the acquisition of land and the construction of a facility to accommodate agriculture-related and community events and services.” The land acquisition component of this goal was achieved with the signing of the lease for the parcel of land which this planning document addresses.

While this Strategic Plan is now some seven years old, it is still the YAA’s strategic guiding document. In pursuit of this strategic direction, the YAA has had a number of studies conducted on its behalf, as outlined in the next section.

As well, the “Whereas” clauses of the Lease Agreement state in part:

“The lessor had decided to lease certain lands to the Lessee on condition that the Lessee shall use the land for agriculture pursuits to promote the strategic growth of agriculture within Yukon in the interest of all Yukon farms.”

Additionally, the Executive of the YAA met on July 5, 2013 for a near future planning session to address some of the challenges currently facing the Association. At this session there was also discussion of potential development options for the YAA lease on the Mayo Road over the next twelve months, as well as a discussion of potential infrastructure developments over the longer term.

**Figure One: Aerial Image of YAA Lease**

#### **4.0 Background on Infrastructure Needs and Research Results.**

The YAA has commissioned a number of studies related to the infrastructure needs of the Yukon agriculture industry over the past two decades. These studies (listed in Appendix C) resulted in the identification of a number of potential infrastructure components that have not yet materialized since they required the acquisition of a parcel of land by the YAA on which to build such infrastructure.

The Serecon (2000) report proposed the following infrastructure components:

- Vegetable cold storage
- Value-added processing for red meat
- Professional-grade processing kitchen
- White meat (poultry) abattoir

The Loeks (2006) multi-use facility feasibility study made the following recommendations about these infrastructure components:

- Vegetable cold storage – do not pursue (at the time of the Loeks report)
- Value-added processing for red meat – pursue the concept; there is a valid business case and the project will support several strategic level development goals.
- Professional-grade processing kitchen – pursue concept; the extra equipment needed is an incremental addition the red meat facility and existing processor can rent space to achieve full use of facility and added revenues.
- White meat (poultry) abattoir – pursue concept; business case at this stage is uncertain, but there is likelihood that poultry production will expand to cover overhead and expenses.

The Malloch Graham and Associates (2009) discussion paper further considered the viability of meat processing infrastructure in the Yukon, looking at market, supply, facility, policies and planning. The discussion paper reviewed the Loeks feasibility study, the scaled down facility concept, notes from the Meat Processing Working Group, and other documents to Yukon meat production and processing. The discussion paper: identified information gaps and challenges, and looked at ways to address these; looked at options for a successful meat processing operation within a multi-use facility; and, made recommendations as to future activities to move Yukon meat processing operations forward.

To address the recommendations and suggestions of the discussion paper the Meat Processing Infrastructure Working Group (the Group) continued to meet through the end of 2010. Minutes of the Group's meetings indicate that it continued to discuss the prospect and possibility of a new meat processing facility. It took account of the views of businesses currently processing meat, how producers would be involved, and what form of governance would be needed for such a facility.

The Group considered the results of a survey of Yukon producers regarding possible use of an abattoir and processing plant. The Group also discussed the submission to YESAB and

subsequent withdrawal of a YAA proposal for an abattoir and processing facility at the Mayo Road site. The withdrawal of the proposal occurred because there was insufficient time to respond to YESAB's request for information about processing and disposal of waste after the City of Whitehorse submitted review comments that denied use of the Whitehorse Landfill for solid waste disposal from the proposed abattoir.

While no clear conclusions appear to have been reached by the Meat Processing Infrastructure Working Group as to whether and how to pursue the establishment of a multi-use facility on the then proposed YAA lease, YAA has entered into a lease for a parcel of land adjacent to the Klondike Highway as outlined above. The Loeks (2006) study saw that "*Suitable land is the essential pre-requisite to this project: about 60 ha, flat, and easily accessible.*" That pre-requisite has now been met with the YAA lease.

Private developments within the agriculture sector of the Yukon economy have overtaken other events. One of the larger producers of vegetables, for example, has constructed a vegetable storage facility of commercial size on his farm. As the Loeks (2006) report suggests, it can be argued that it is not currently justified to build another vegetable storage facility. (This argument notwithstanding, some in the agriculture industry believe there may still be a place for a vegetable storage facility where several growers might cooperatively store vegetables and that such a facility could be constructed on the lease.) Other infrastructure components, previously suggested – commercial outlet for sale of Yukon agricultural products; commercial outlet for sale of agriculture-related tools, parts, and components; centralized access to fertilizer bins and bulk storage of agriculture-related products; drive-on weigh scale; YAA-owned fuel storage and cardlock system – are no longer seen as pressing needs.

On the other hand, several pieces of infrastructure are still seen as being necessary and could usefully be located on the YAA lease on the Mayo Road. Reviewing the background information as well as the results of a recent YAA member survey regarding the use of the lease provides the following list of potential uses:

- Multi-use abattoir and value-added processing facility
- Heated storage for the mobile abattoir
- A docking station for the mobile abattoir
- A cooler, freezer, and small processing room
- A vegetable processing facility
- A commercial kitchen
- Storage for YAA-owned equipment
- Facility such as a hall for community events
- Facility for events such as the Klondike Harvest Fair
- Horse event facility including an appropriately-sized indoor riding arena
- Finishing lot for cattle
- Quarantine facility
- Community garden plots
- Research for Yukon crops
- Research green house from Yukon College

Acquisition of the lease has prompted the need to do some serious planning about the use of the site. This resulted in the development of the terms of reference for the preparation of this report. The terms of reference requested that the plan “identify projects that can proceed in the short term ... [i]dentify activities that will require longer term planning ...” Most of the topics on the list of possible uses for the lease provided above will be discussed in the following sections.

## **5.0 Short Term Projects**

Now that the lease for the 65 ha parcel has been obtained, there are a few short term – meaning within the next 12 to 18 months – projects that readily suggest themselves in order to provide security to the site, to make it accessible for future use, and provide some elementary infrastructure to facilitate the future development and use of the site. The lease site was chosen in part because it is level and a portion of it is not heavily wooded. Such relatively open developing forest as exists on the site has mainly grown following the 1958 wildfire that covered much of the south central Yukon. Soils on this flat land area are a mixture of sand, silt and clay. The northwestern portion appears to be saline and collects melt water in the spring.

### **5.1 Fencing**

Most of the parcel that makes up the lease site was previously bounded on the south, west and north sides by fences along the adjoining property margins. The previous holder of the area now leased to the YAA constructed a fence on the east side of the lease at the edge of and possibly on the YECL distribution line right-of-way. However, a condition of the lease is that a buffer of vegetation 60 m wide be left in place between the easterly margin of the property along the Klondike Highway side and that portion of the lease where development will take place or where clearing may be done. This required relocating the fence along the east boundary of the parcel. The remainder of the fences on the lease perimeter is in a state of disrepair and also needed to be replaced.

Prior to this planning exercise being undertaken it had already been decided by the YAA executive that the fencing project would be the first activity on the site, in part because fencing reconstruction was exempt under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Act* (YESAA) and identified as such in the conditions attached to the lease document. Construction of the perimeter fence and some minimal cross fencing is also seen as an essential piece of infrastructure, ensuring that livestock from neighbouring farming operations do not wander onto the site and, when the leased land may be used to accommodate livestock within its borders in the future, will contain such livestock. This fencing would also serve to hold animals that could be brought to the lease for slaughter once a docking station for the mobile abattoir was constructed. The perimeter fence will also help to ensure the security of the property.

As a condition of this planning exercise the consultant worked with the Executive Director of the YAA in preparing the funding application to the federal-territorial Growing Forward 2 program. The application was for funds to purchase the necessary fencing material, posts, rails and wire, etc.; unfortunately, the initial application was declined. The Executive Director is revising the application with a view to resubmitting it.

## 5.2 Access Road

Another component of essential infrastructure is an access road. While there currently is a rudimentary access road across the ditch to the north end of the lease from the Klondike Highway, this access is at the wrong location for the best use of the parcel. Therefore, the YAA has engaged a contractor to construct approximately 300 m of access road, 10 m wide with a graveled surface, from the west side of the Klondike Highway at approximately Km 205.7, with an appropriately-sized culvert in the ditch to accommodate any runoff water in the ditch. This proposed road will provide access more or less to the centre of the lease. With access to the central portion of the lease, this will allow for further access to be constructed to other portions of the lease as needs dictate.

Again, as a condition of this planning exercise the consultant worked with the Executive Director of the YAA in preparing another funding application to the federal-territorial Growing Forward 2 program. This application is for funds to enter into an agreement with a contractor to construct the access road. The approximate cost of the road is \$35,000.00.

Since the construction of the access road requires the application for and issuance of a Land Use Permit and a Highways Access Permit, as well as using heavy machinery to move material, and involves the application for funds from, in part, a federal agency funding program, this project triggered the application of YESAA. The consultant has worked with the Executive Director of the YAA in the preparation of applications for the Land Use Permit and the Highways Access Permit. He has also worked with her in the completion and submission of the YESA Board Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition to the Whitehorse Designated Office, and meeting with representatives of the YAA executive, the Agriculture Branch and the Whitehorse Designated Office with her. He also met with the lands managers of both the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council to explain the project to them. In the course of the preparation of the Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition he outlined a process for the submission of this type of form for possible future projects on the YAA lease. As already mentioned, this process is laid out in Appendix D. The consultant also met with or contacted representatives of the Yukon Electrical Company Limited (YECL) and the Yukon Energy Corporation to obtain the necessary letters of support for the construction of the road across the power line rights-of-way of these two companies, which lie between the Klondike Highway and the YAA lease. The Executive Director and the consultant also met with the Whitehorse District Highways Foreman at the access road location to provide him with the information necessary for the issuance of the road right-of-way access permit.

A side benefit to the construction of the road is that some of the fill material for the road bed will come from a dugout or pond that will be excavated on the lease by the contractor who will build the road. A dugout has been discussed as one of the "infrastructure" components that will be needed to collect spring runoff and summer rainfall to be used in watering livestock that it is anticipated will eventually be kept on the lease, at least on a temporary basis.

### 5.3 Supply of Electricity and Drilling of a Well

Two other immediate short term projects that are suggested for the lease are provision of a supply of electricity and a water well. Electricity will be necessary to power any infrastructure development on the site, including the well pump. This electricity will be provided by YECL; the company's transmission runs parallel to the eastern boundary of the lease. The access road clearing will be of sufficient width to accommodate a power line onto the property along its edge. It may be necessary to install a temporary service panel in conjunction with the power line. Bringing 300 amp 3-phase power (abattoir equipment is commonly 3-phase) electricity onto the site is anticipated to cost in the neighbourhood of \$37,000 plus GST, assuming 3 poles, 2 anchors, 3 – 50kVA transformers and stringing of approximately 200 meters of 4 - #4 ACSR wire. YECL would view the installation of 3-phase power to a site that would ultimately include an abattoir as a commercial operation. As such YAA would be eligible for a refund from YECL if the load use is above 5 Kw (See letter from YECL, Appendix F). If single phase electricity is brought onto the site, the cost would be reduced by approximately \$10,000. Funding for the power line may be obtained from Growing Forward 2 but the YAA would also be eligible to apply for funds for this project from the Yukon Government's (YG) Community Development Fund.

As will be shown later in this report, future anticipated infrastructure development on the lease will need an abundant supply of fresh water. Therefore, one of the short term projects suggested is the drilling and development of a well on the property in the central portion of the lease where the access road will end. Having a well drilled and developed on the lease site is anticipated to cost in the neighbourhood of \$28,500.00 based on an estimated depth of 200 feet, the average depth of other wells in the vicinity. The cost of installing a well consists of:

- Drill rig mobilization fee: \$ 500.00
- Cost of drilling: \$13000.00 (\$65.00 per cased ft x 200 ft)
- Installation fee: \$ 500.00
- Screens: \$ 1250.00
- Well development: \$ 500.00
- Water sample chemical analysis: \$ 250.00
- Well pump: \$ 7000.00
- Water treatment system: \$ 5500.00
- Approximate total cost: \$28500.00

These cost estimates were provided by one local well drilling company. Obviously, several quotes would need to be obtained to get the most competitive price before proceeding with the well project. Funding for the drilling of the well may be obtained from Growing Forward 2 but the YAA would also be eligible to apply for funds for the well project from the Yukon Government's (YG) Community Development Fund.

### 5.4 Heated Storage for Mobile Abattoir

The Agriculture Branch has recently entered into a twelve month contract for the operation of the government-owned mobile abattoir. The past practice has been for the abattoir contractor to store

it on his property. It has been suggested that while year-round use of the abattoir might not be possible even if it was stored in a heated facility, the period of use could be extended. It has further been suggested that an appropriate location for such a heated facility would be the YAA lease. Assuming a building to accommodate the mobile abattoir would need to be about 20 feet by 40 feet with 12 foot high ceilings, the construction cost of such a building would run on the order of \$200 per sq. ft., so approximately \$160,000.00. The heating system would be an additional cost. Extra space in the building might be used to store some of the smaller farm implements that the YAA currently owns.

Construction of heated storage for the mobile abattoir could conceivably extend the time during the year when it would be available for use. This could cover the transition to a docking station with attendant facilities.

## **6.0 Longer Term Projects**

The several studies that have been completed for the YAA over the last couple of decades have indicated a number of infrastructure projects that could be built on the YAA lease to support the viability and expansion of Yukon agriculture. Discussions amongst members of the industry and the members of the YAA, and amongst members of the YAA executive have also indentified some other longer term projects. Longer term means projects which would proceed in eighteen months or more from the present although planning could begin before then. These are not presented in any order of priority.

### **6.1 Mobile Abattoir Docking Station and Ancillary Facilities**

While there has been a significant amount of time and resources devoted to the feasibility considerations of a multi-use facility that would, among other services, provide for slaughter, butchering, and processing of red and white meat products, for the time being such a facility appears to be some way off in the future. At the same time there has been some discussion about the provision of docking stations for the mobile abattoir in different locations in the Yukon. It has been suggested that the YAA lease would be an appropriate location for a docking station in the Whitehorse area. None of the documentation reviewed for this report has elaborated on what a “docking station” would entail.

To offer a suggestion based on the material reviewed, a docking station would be a structure or building against which the mobile abattoir would be located or “docked”, with water and electrical hook-ups, turning it temporarily into a fixed abattoir. It is assumed, at the YAA lease site, that the docking station would be part of a building that would house a cooler, freezer, and small meat processing room. Holding pens would be located adjacent to the docking station for livestock to be slaughtered and processed.

Construction of a docking station and the slaughter and limited processing for red and possibly white meat at the YAA lease would mean that the regulations having to do with the disposal of animal carcasses would have to be adhered to. Special consideration would have to given to “Specified Risk Material” or SRM, disposal of which is governed by federal regulations. It is understood that the mobile abattoir has a permit from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to

transport SRM for disposal. Acceptable disposal methods for animal carcasses or waste are incineration, burial, and composting. Whether these methods for disposal of offal from livestock slaughtered – but not produced on the YAA lease – using the mobile abattoir facilities are possible at this location will need to be investigated further.

The Yukon government provides for a permit for on-farm operation of a mobile abattoir. Further investigation will also be necessary as to whether application for and issuance of such a permit will be necessary to operate the mobile abattoir on the YAA lease. A number of regulations may apply, namely:

- *Solid Waste Regulations (Environment Act)*
- *Meat Inspection and Abattoir Regulations (Agriculture Products Act)*
- *Public Health Regulations (Public Health and Safety Act)*
- *Assessable Activities, Exceptions and Executive Committee Projects Regulations (Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act)*

Ancillary to such a docking station, it has been suggested, a small meat processing facility could be constructed. It would accommodate a freezer and a cooler. It could simply be a modest building with a room in which meat from animals slaughtered at the docking station would be processed, following an appropriate hanging period in a cooler that would be part of the structure. The meat could then be wrapped or otherwise prepared by the owner for personal use or for his/her customers, and frozen if desired. This might facilitate increased use of the abattoir service. A fee would have to be charged for the use of this facility.

Electricity from the grid and water from a well would be necessary to support a docking station and the ancillary meat processing room.

This longer term project would require further consideration and planning before the decision is taken to proceed. It could fill in the gap between no processing facility and the more complex multi-use facility that has been discussed for some years.

## **6.2 Agriculture-related Research**

It has been advocated for some time now that once YAA acquired an agricultural lease, it should be used in part for agriculture-related research. In the course of gathering background material for this report it was suggested that Yukon College may be looking for a new location for its experimental greenhouse.

Rick Steele of Research Services at Yukon College indicated that they are content to keep the green house where it is but that his unit is looking at more extensive research on bio-char. The College Research Services are currently working with some YAA members on smaller bio-char experiments but would be interested in pursuing with YAA the establishment of larger test plots at the lease. They would also possibly be interested in the local production of bio-char to overcome both its relatively high purchase cost and the high cost of bringing the bio-char material into the Yukon.

Other possible research projects have been suggested, some having to do with production of crops on saline soils found on the lease.

The potential to use the lease for agriculture-related research projects seems obvious but will require further study.

### **6.3 Quarantine Facility**

In the course of reviewing background material for this report, the suggestion that a quarantine facility could be established on the YAA lease was noted. The Yukon *Animal Health Act*, the object of which is to prevent the entry into or spread of disease in the Yukon, particularly to domestic animals, provides for the quarantining of livestock suspected or known to have a transmittable disease. However, the Act does not seem to address the establishment of a place of quarantine although it does seem that it would be useful to have some such designated location. Whether the YAA lease, which is well inside the boundaries of the Yukon, would be the best place to hold in quarantine animals with a disease or suspected of having a disease, needs to be examined further. It may well be preferable for animals which are being trucked into the Yukon to be quarantined at a location near the point of entry into the Yukon.

Another consideration is whether, given that there may from time to time be healthy animals on the lease awaiting slaughter, the use of the lease for quarantine at the same time is appropriate or desirable. It is recognized that the lease consists of 65 ha and the quarantine location could be kept a considerable distance from the mobile abattoir docking station holding pen location, ensuring that the likelihood of disease transmission would be minimal.

The subject of establishing a quarantine facility on the lease should be discussed with the Yukon's chief veterinary officer to determine what may be possible and desirable.

### **6.4 Multi-use Abattoir and Value-added Processing Facility**

The subject of the construction of a multi-use abattoir and value-added processing facility has been discussed in one form or another and in one forum or another for several decades. Most recently there was the Malloch Graham and Associates Discussion Paper (2009) on the development of meat processing infrastructure. Some consideration of this paper and the topic was provided in Section 4.0 Background.

Based on the several infrastructure feasibility studies, discussion papers, and the minutes of the Meat Processing Infrastructure Working Group, there is on-going interest in establishing a multi-use facility of some type. However, it appears – based on the research – that there is not a sufficient number of livestock and poultry currently being raised in the Yukon to support such a facility. Conversely, it is equally arguable that once the infrastructure is in place, there will be the incentive to increase production.

Perhaps the approach to take, as suggested above, is to build the heated storage for the mobile abattoir first, and then construct the docking station and small processing facility. The availability of the abattoir at more times of the year may spread out and increase production,

particularly of poultry and demonstrate that the increased production warrants construction of the multi-use facility. Ready access from the abattoir to processing space (supported with ample cold water for chilling the bird carcasses), supported by cooler and freezer units may make preparing birds for market easier, providing incentive for year-round production. It is acknowledged that this may not be sufficient or the necessary incentive to increase livestock production.

The multi-use facility concept needs to be kept alive and re-visited once the response to the extended availability of the mobile abattoir, a docking station, and small processing facility is determined.

## **6.5 Fairgrounds and Community Building**

The Klondike Harvest Fair has not taken place for several years. The YAA Strategic Plan suggested that once the Association acquired a lease, it might be used to host the Klondike Harvest Fair. The distance from Whitehorse should not deter attendance since it is near the former Whitehorse Rodeo Grounds; the rodeos held there in the past were well attended. The YAA lease would have adequate space in which to host such an event and the level site would lend itself to development of appropriate grounds, including ample parking areas. When the Klondike Harvest Fair was running it was always necessary to obtain and set up large tents in which to display the wide range of canning, baking, garden vegetables, and crafts competition and display categories. It has been suggested that the YAA lease would be an appropriate location to construct a large hall which could be used to accommodate these aspects of a harvest fair.

With respect to the hall, it was also noted that there is no large meeting building to serve the needs of rural residents on the western and northern periphery of Whitehorse. Such meeting space as is available, for example the meeting room at the Hootelinqua Fire Hall near the junction of the Klondike Highway and the Takhini Hotsprings Road, often has standing room only when the topic of a particular meeting is of strong interest to local residents. The population in this area continues to grow as land is sub-divided or new residential lots become available.

The concept of fairgrounds to accommodate the Klondike Harvest Fair together with a large building in which community meetings, dances and other events might take place at all times of the year appears to be worth further consideration as another use of the YAA lease.

## **6.6 Horse Event Facility**

The Yukon equestrian community appears to be experiencing some problems with respect to securing a facility in which to hold its events. The Yukon Horse and Rider Association lease for the show grounds on Range Road may be coming to an end as housing develop proceeds in the area. Proposed replacement options in the Kara Speedway and Cowley Creek areas of Whitehorse do not appear viable. The privately-owned indoor riding arena not far from the YAA lease, while adequate for exercising and training horses and riders, does not provide seating for an audience at equestrian events.

The most recent YAA Strategic Plan noted that “There continues to be support for an agriculture multi-use facility to accommodate events such as the Klondike Harvest Fair, auctions, and horse-and-rider events.” It is understood that Dave Andrew prepared a feasibility study some years ago for just such an agriculture multi-use facility. It would seem an opportune time to review this possibility.

The Yukon Horse and Rider Association (YHRA) recently (July 12, 2013) advertised for a facilitator to – among other things – conduct a workshop with “potential partners with infrastructure needs similar to those of the Association ...” It would be prudent of the YAA to be involved in this workshop which presumably will take place in late summer. The event would provide the opportunity to explore possible mutual interest in planning such a horse event facility on the YAA lease. It has also been brought to the attention of the consultant that the YHRA recently commissioned a study on its needs for such a facility but the study results have not been reviewed. It is understood that representatives of YAA and YHRA are already meeting on topics of mutual interest.

## **6.7 Community Garden Plots**

In the recent survey conducted by the staff of the YAA which included a question regarding uses to which the lease might be put, it was suggested that community garden plots could be made available for gardeners. The Whitehorse Downtown Urban Garden Society (WDUGS) makes small garden beds available to Whitehorse residents but there may be other residents who would want a larger garden plot. These could be made available at the lease. However, clearing of the land and preparation of the garden site would first be required. Also, the soil would probably need improvement. This project could possibly be undertaken in conjunction with the bio-char research. In any event, such a project would require research to determine the potential demand for this service before the time and money was invested in preparation of a site on the lease for garden plots. Conversations could be initiated with representatives of the (WDUGS) to determine whether some of their members may be interested in larger garden plots.

It has recently come to the consultant’s attention that larger garden plots were offered at an agricultural property to the east of Whitehorse last year but there was very little interest. This would need to be investigated further before a great deal of time and resources were invested in offering plots at the YAA lease.

## **6.8 Hiring a Caretaker to Manage the YAA Lease**

In the survey and in conversations during the preparation of this report it was mentioned more than once that to achieve the best use of the lease it would be necessary to hire a caretaker or manager for the site. This caretaker/manager position could, under the direction of the Executive Director, plan, initiate and carry out or manage the various projects or activities on the lease that the YAA Board of Directors determines should proceed, both in the short term and the longer term projects. Obviously, finding the funding for this position would be necessary. Some of the proposed activities would, it is anticipated, be revenue generating and could eventually more than cover the cost of wages and benefits. Ideally, this person would live on the lease (which would necessitate the construction of at least a modest dwelling, whether stand-alone or an

apartment in one of the proposed structures on the lease) which would ensure the security of the infrastructure being proposed for the lease. Having a YAA representative on site would also enable efficient use of the infrastructure and other YAA assets such as the inventory of agriculture implements which could then be securely stored on the site and rented out from that location, thus being more likely to generate revenue consistently from this equipment.

It is recognized that the YAA may be facing some challenges in the next year or two in maintaining the funding it currently receives for staff positions. Finding funding for increased staffing would represent an additional challenge. However, the concept warrants discussion at the YAA Board level.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

Based on the research conducted, the consultant is recommending that the YAA proceed with all of the short term projects listed above, some of which have already begun. Finding the necessary funding for these projects will be a challenge since the total amount, roughly estimated, is in the vicinity of \$370,000.

A further recommendation is that all of the longer term projects be investigated to determine their viability. On the surface, all of these projects meet the test of contributing to the continued development and sustainability of Yukon agriculture and food production. An initial step would be to prioritize these longer term goals and pursue those that are seen as the higher priority and are most likely to be achievable.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

After many years of pursuing the goal of obtaining a parcel of agricultural land on which to develop infrastructure to support the advancement of Yukon agriculture, this goal has been achieved. Now that YAA has this lease it needs to put in place the primary services and infrastructure that will help it move on to the other goals of developing the necessary infrastructure. The short term projects, while providing a challenge in terms of obtaining the necessary funding, appear to be reasonably “doable”. The longer term goals will require prioritization, additional research and identification of other sources of funding beyond Growing Forward 2.

## **Appendix A: YAA Lease and Lease Conditions**

## **Appendix B – List of Contacts**

Mike Blumenschein, President, YAA

Jim Dillabough, Director, YAA

Bill Drury, Director, YAA

Sylvia Gibson, Executive Director, YAA

Wayne Grove, Director, YAA

Lyle Henderson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Sustainable Resources, EMR, YG

Tony Hill, Director, Agriculture Branch, Energy Mines and Resources (EMR), Yukon Government (YG)

Krista McKinnon, Yukon Electrical Company Limited

David Murray, Agriculture Branch, EMR, YG

Al Stannard, Director, YAA

Rick Steele, Research Services, Yukon College

Cain Vangel, Past President, Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA)

Mike Winstanley, Legal Counsel, Natural Resources and Environmental Law Group, Justice, YG

Tiana Zakus, Treasurer, YAA

## **Appendix C – List of Documentation Reviewed**

Clifton Associates Ltd. 2012. Growing the Yukon: a sustainable irrigation development and management strategy. Regina.

Government of Yukon. 2006. Yukon Agricultural Policy. Whitehorse.

Loeks, David. 2006. Multi-Use Feasibility Study. Whitehorse.

Malloch Graham and Associates. 2009. Discussion Paper: Towards Development of Meat Processing Infrastructure in Yukon. Whitehorse.

Meat Processing Infrastructure Working Group Meeting Notes. Unpublished.

Statistics Canada. 2006. Farms in the Territories. On-Line at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-629-x/4123827-eng.htm>.

Statistics Canada. 2006. *Census of Agriculture, Farm data and Farm Operator Data*. Catalogue No. 95-629-XWE. Ottawa.

Statistics Canada, 2012. 2011 Census of Agriculture, Farm and Farm Operator Data, catalogue no. 95-640-XWE.

Yukon Agricultural Association. 2005. Yukon Agricultural Association Request for Funding for Land Acquisition. Whitehorse.

*Yukon Animal Health Act*

*Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and Regulations*

*Yukon Highways Act*

*Yukon Mayo Road Development Act and Regulations*

*Yukon Territorial Lands Act and Land Use Regulation*

## **Appendix D – The Process for Completing and Submitting a Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition to Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board Designated Office**

Completing and submitting a Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition – the form that will most likely be the one to fill out and submit to a YESAB Designated Office for an agriculture project – should be quite straightforward. Most times it will be, sometimes it can get complicated.

**Step One** is to figure out if what you are planning to do will actually “trigger” an assessment. Most projects on your privately owned land will be exempt or will be on the exceptions list. To find out, (assuming you have access to a computer and the internet) got to:

<http://www.yesab.ca/submit-a-project/do-i-need-an-assessment/>

This YESAB site will walk you through the process of determining whether what you are planning to do is actually subject to an assessment. It will also help you figure out what type of assessment or evaluation is necessary for your project. Most agriculture projects will be assessed at the Designated Office level.

There are six Designated Offices in the Yukon: Dawson City, Haines Junction, Mayo, Teslin, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse. The one that’s closest to your farm or agriculture project is almost always the one you hand in or send your form to.

Before you fill out the form, the website tells you to talk to the “Regulator” to make sure that you do indeed need to submit the form. An agriculture-related project may have a range of regulators, from the Yukon Water Board to the Lands Branch. The best thing to do first is to go and talk with one of the staff of the Agriculture Branch. Even though they are not the “Regulator” they are familiar with the YESAB process and are prepared to help you figure out if your project will need to be assessed or not. And which agency you’ll have to apply to for the permits you’ll need. If your project does need an assessment, they will be happy to help you fill out the form.

**Step Two** is going over what information you will need to fill out the Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition (as mentioned, most times you will use this form even though no land is being “disposed” of). Again, go to another part of the YESAB website, this time to “Pre-submission For a Designated Office Submission”:

<http://www.yesab.ca/submit-a-project/pre-submission-what-you-need-to-know-before-submitting-a-project-proposal/>

It will give you information about what you need to know before you submit the form. You can go over this with staff at the Agriculture Branch too. The site also gives you some idea about how long the process will take.

**Step Three** is actually filling out the form. As mentioned, most agriculture projects will be dealt with by the local Designated Office. Most agriculture projects are fairly simple so you should not need to do “studies” to gather information before you fill out the form. Again, the Ag Branch staff can help you with this. If you are outside of Whitehorse you’ll have to phone them; call 1-800-661-0408 and ask to be put through to the Agriculture Branch.

Usually, the more information you provide when you fill out the form, the less likelihood that you'll have to provide additional information once you've submitted it. It is best to take your completed form to the local YESAB office also and go over the completed form with one of the assessment officers to make sure you've not left out something important *before* you submit it.

You can check all this out at:

<http://www.yesab.ca/submit-a-project/how-to-submit-a-project-for-assessment/>

On this same web page there are links to the project proposal form on the right side of the page:

<http://www.yesab.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/4-Project-Proposal-Form-Land-Dispositions.pdf>

You can fill in this form on the website and then send it electronically. Or, you can print off the form from the webpage as a blank and fill it in by hand or with a typewriter (if you're lucky enough to still have one of these machines). Unless you have advanced Adobe software you probably won't be able to download the form with the information you've entered on it to your computer but you can print it out with the information you've entered. This is a bit frustrating.

There is also a guidance document that you can find the link for, again on the right side of the "how to submit a project for assessment" web page, called "Proponent's Guide: Completing a Land Disposition Project Proposal". It's worth reading. It will help you fill out the form correctly; don't let it scare you. You'll find it at:

<http://www.yesab.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Completing-a-Land-Disposition-Project-Proposal-PRINT.pdf>

Once you've submitted the form the Designated Office will review it to make sure it's complete or "adequate". If they don't think it is, they'll ask you for more information. The quicker you get it back to them, the sooner the assessment gets to the next stage. In the second stage they ask the public if they have any comments on your project and they evaluate your project. Once the evaluation is done the Designated Office makes recommendations to the Regulator about whether the project should proceed and under what conditions. The Regulator can accept, vary or reject the recommendations. The Regulator then, usually, issues the permit with whatever conditions it thinks are necessary.

Then you can go ahead with your project.

## **Appendix E – Guidelines for Infrastructure Projects for the YAA Lease**

The Yukon Agricultural Association’s leased parcel of agricultural and grazing land was obtained for the “primary purpose ... to provide the Lessee [YAA] with Land to undertake various agricultural activities including, but not limited to, abattoir and meat processing activities.” (Lease Agreement 2012) The following guidelines shall serve to ensure that any projects proposed for the YAA lease conform to the lease agreement.

Any project proposed for the YAA lease shall:

- 1) Comply with the conditions of the lease;
- 2) Further the objectives of the YAA constitution and by-laws;
- 3) Comply with and further the goals of the YAA Strategic Plan 2007
- 4) Comply with the *Mayo Road Development Act and Regulations* and other applicable legislation;
- 5) Submit a synopsis of the proposed project to the YAA Executive Committee; and
- 6) Obtain the approval of the YAA Executive Committee in writing before proceeding.

Any person proposing a project for the YAA Lease shall:

- 1) Ensure that the project complies with all of the preceding guidelines set out in this document;
- 2) Shall carry out or arrange to have carried out all of the necessary research to support the project and demonstrate its practical and economic viability;
- 3) If the project triggers an assessment under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, shall undertake the completion, submission of the YESAB Project Proposal Form: Land Disposition, as well as provision of any required follow-up information;
- 4) Shall obtain any funding necessary to ensure the construction and operation of the proposed project; and,
- 5) Shall indemnify the YAA from any legal action that may result from the project.

**Appendix F: YECL Letter regarding Estimate to Provide Electrical Service to YAA Lease**

