

YUKON AGRICULTURE

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

2005-2007



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Government of Yukon, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture Branch

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Market and Industry Services Branch

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- Growers of Organic Food Yukon
- Yukon Game Growers Association
- Fireweed Community Market Society

PHOTOS

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List of acronyms

AAFC	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
ACAAF	Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food
AIAC	Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee
APF	Agricultural Policy Framework
AUM	Animal unit months
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CAIS	Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization
CASS	Canadian Agricultural Skills Service
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
COABC	Certified Organic Association of BC
CSA	Community supported agriculture
CWD	Chronic wasting disease
CYIA	Canada-Yukon Implementation Agreement
EGDD	Effective growing degree days
FDP	Farm Development Plan
GDD	Growing degree days
GE	Genetically engineered
GoOFY	Growers of Organic Food Yukon
PARC	Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre
WWOOF	World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms
YAA	Yukon Agricultural Association
YESAA	<i>Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act</i>
YESAB	Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board

INTRODUCTION

The Yukon agriculture industry has been an important part of Yukon life since the Gold Rush. In those days, being able to obtain locally grown food was often the difference between eating and going hungry. Since that time, improvements in transportation have resulted in much of our food being imported from the south. Yukon farms, however, still play an important role by providing fresh, healthy products for local consumption. There are many challenges facing the Yukon industry. The local industry continues to be relatively small, growing conditions are difficult, operating costs are high and local markets are limited. There is also a lack of infrastructure, and access to capital can be difficult. Despite these challenges, the Yukon has a vibrant, diverse agriculture and agri-food industry. Local farmers are expanding their market share of fresh food products and supplying local retailers and farmer's markets.

This report provides a description of agricultural programs, services and policies administered by the governments of the Yukon and Canada, as well as a summary of initiatives taken by the private and non-government sectors, during the 2005-2007 calendar years. The document includes information from the 2006 Agricultural Census and the 2007 Multi-Year Development Plan. The target readership includes farmers, agricultural land applicants, other government departments, the general public, and non-government organizations such as the Yukon Agricultural Association.

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS 2005-2007

January 2005. Agriculture land lottery held at Gentian Lane, near Whitehorse.

April 2005. The Canada-Yukon Agriculture Policy Framework (APF) program guide is released making available 14 new programs developed through a local advisory committee.

May 2005. The Fireweed Community Market opens on the Whitehorse waterfront. The market becomes a vibrant success as consumers are connected with producers and discover locally grown and raised foods.

November 2005. The new *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* came into full effect on November 28, 2005. This new act lays out a comprehensive arms-length-from-government environmental assessment process.

December 2005. Yukon signs an agreement with Canada to distribute \$273,000 to eligible Yukon producers. Funding is from a federal program designed to compensate farmers for low commodity prices suffered in 2004.

April 2006. After three years of stakeholder consultation *Vision for Yukon Agriculture: 2006 Yukon Agricultural Policy* is released with a vision to increase production of healthy, locally grown food for local consumption. Two key changes in this revision of the 1991 policy include land development being credited on a one-for-one basis against a market price appraisal and allowing seven years to complete the development contract.

May 2006. A census of agriculture is taken across Canada.

August 2006. The Yukon takes possession of a new, custom built mobile abattoir designed to improve food safety for livestock producers and allow for inspection of red meat products entering the retail market food chain.

September 2006. Genesis software is purchased by the newly formed Yukon Food Processors Association to meet national regulatory requirements for ingredient labelling coming into force on January 1, 2007.



Fall day at the LaPrairie Bison Ranch.



Agriculture Minister visits the Yukon. (left to right) Dave Andrew, Tracey Andrew, Minister Chuck Strahl, Minister Archie Lang.

May 2007. 2006 Census of Agriculture figures released report that the number of Yukon farms and reported agricultural sales decreased over the past five years. A closer look at the numbers reveals increased land utilization and an improvement in management practices and productivity, with an increase in irrigated acres, on 148 farms reporting sales.

August 2007. Federal Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl makes his first visit to the Yukon to meet with the industry and the Yukon ministry. Within a week he is shuffled by the Prime Minister to take over Indian and Northern Affairs and Gerry Ritz takes over as Agriculture Minister.

October 2007. The first four of 17 agricultural parcels were offered to the public by lottery in Haines Junction.

December 2007. The new Multi-Year Development Plan is released. The plan outlines a series of recommendations and targets *“to increase and sustain production, sales and profitability in the Yukon agricultural and agri-food industry.”*

THE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE

AGRICULTURE SUITABILITY

Less than two per cent of the Yukon's 483,450 square kilometres is suitable for agricultural development because of limitations of geography, climate and soils.

The Yukon is part of the Canadian Cordilleran region, which is characterized by mountainous terrain and the presence of glaciers and icefields in some areas. Soil-based agriculture is limited to major river valleys including those of the Yukon, Takhini, Pelly,

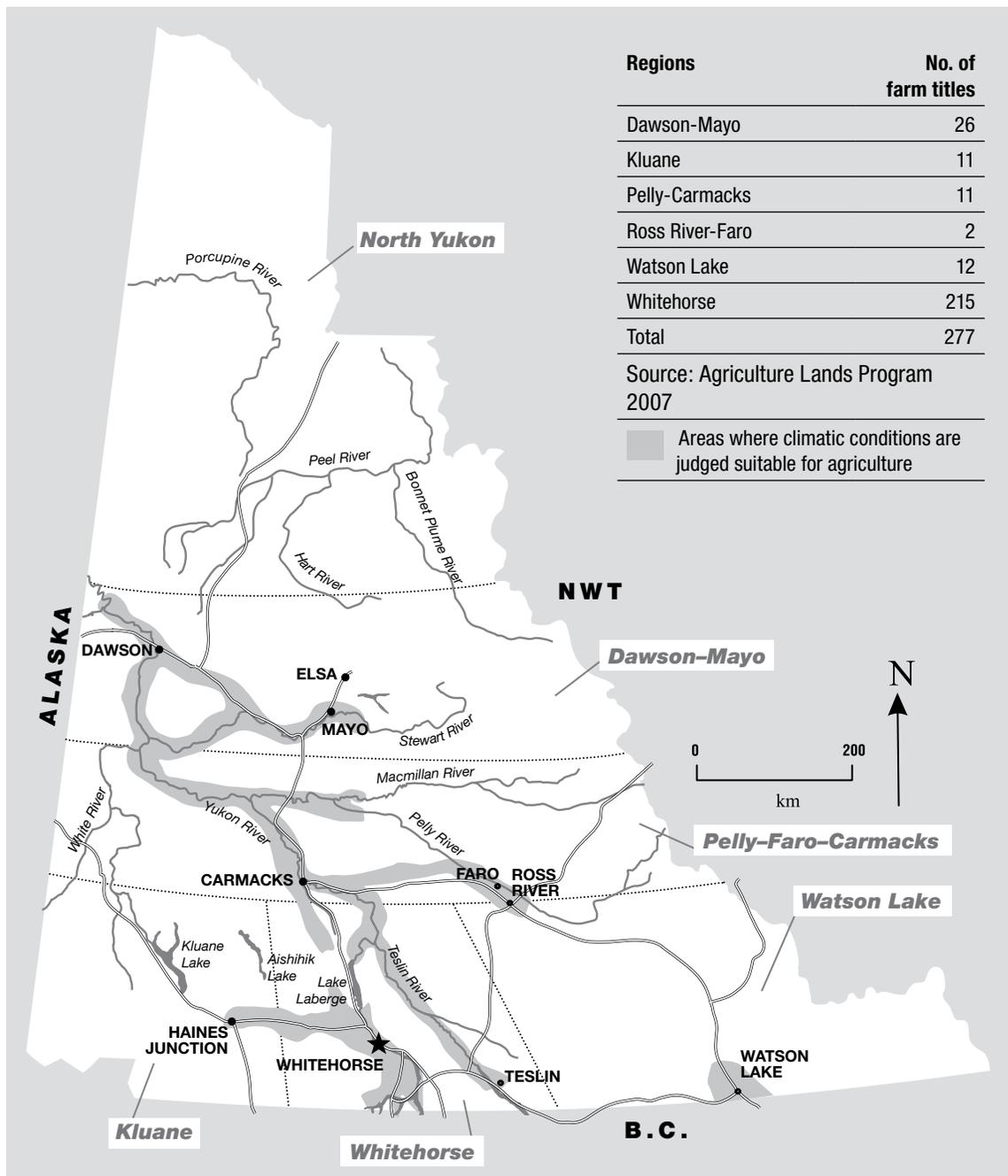


Figure 1. Location of Yukon agricultural areas.

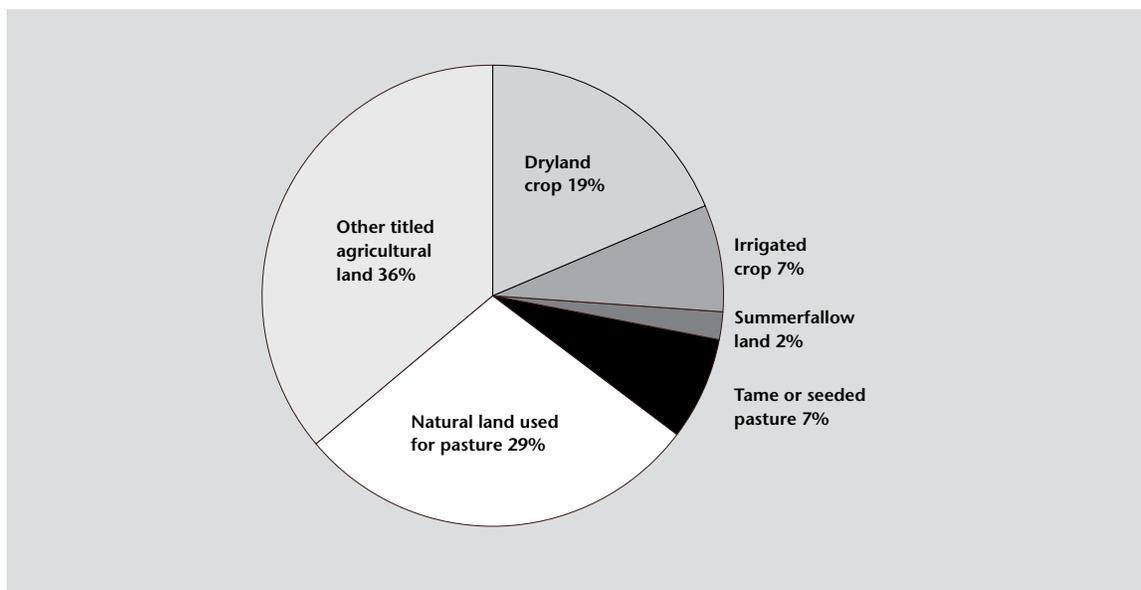


Figure 2. All agriculture land use in the Yukon. (Source: 2006 Census of Agriculture)

Stewart and Liard (Figure 1). For the most part, agricultural activity is located on river sediments. In the Takhini and Dezadeash valleys, typical agricultural soils are formed on silts and clays deposited by glacial Lake Champagne. Agricultural land use in these valleys is divided into a number of uses with 19% in dryland crop and 7% in irrigated lands (Figure 2).

The Yukon has a sub-arctic continental climate with temperatures reaching as high as 30°C in the summer and as low as -50°C in the winter. The average frost free period ranges from 93 days in the Watson Lake area to 21 days at Haines Junction. Frost free periods also vary substantially from year to year at any location. Long hours of daylight during the summer promote rapid growth and compensate to some extent for the cooler summer temperatures experienced north of 60° latitude.

Average annual precipitation ranges from about 20 centimetres west of Whitehorse to more than 40 centimetres in Watson Lake. The southwest Yukon, where most agricultural production occurs, lies within the rain shadow created by the St. Elias and Coastal mountains. Southwest Yukon is subject to droughts between April and July. This is a serious problem for crop germination.

Yukon soils are generally deficient in nitrogen and phosphorous. Potassium and sulphur abundance is often dependent on local geology and is difficult to predict. Since testing started in 1984, more than half of the soils tested by the Yukon Agriculture Branch have been deficient in potassium. The most common micronutrient deficiencies are boron and magnesium. Soils throughout the Yukon are low in organic matter, and salinity has been identified as a problem in localized areas. Permafrost is found throughout the Yukon,

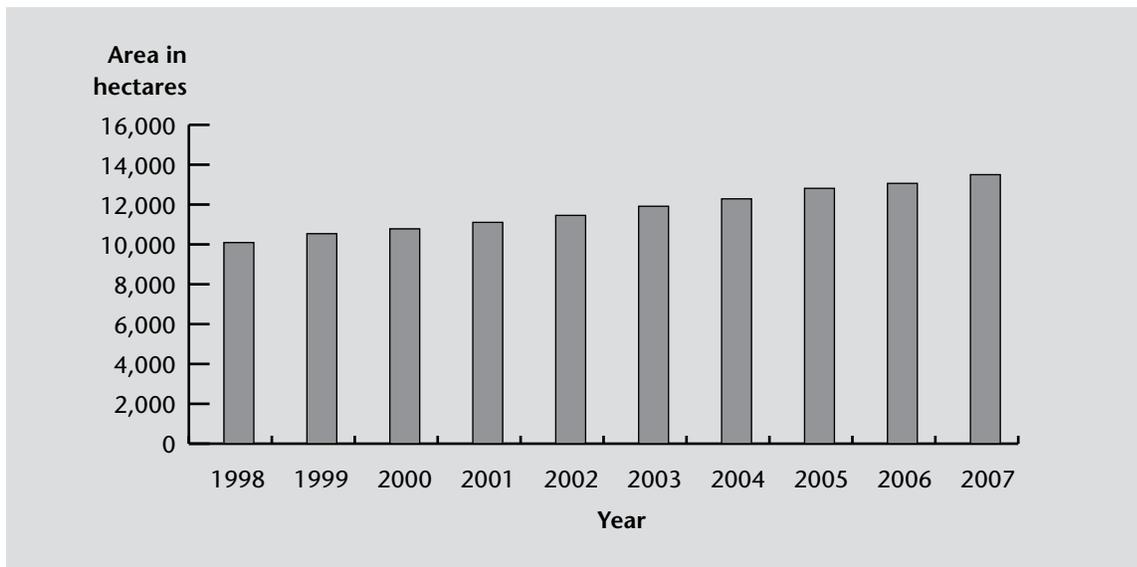


Figure 3. Total area in titled agricultural land.

varying from sporadic discontinuous in southern agricultural areas, and increasing to extensive discontinuous at the northern extreme of agricultural activity in the territory.

YUKON AGRICULTURAL AREAS

The total amount of land disposed of by the Yukon government for agricultural use is 13,500 hectares (Figure 3) in 274 dispositions. Land dispositions are dominantly around the Whitehorse area. Seventy-four per cent of lands disposed of are within 60 kilometres of Whitehorse.

OBTAINING LAND FOR AGRICULTURAL USE

There are two methods for obtaining land for agriculture: through private sale or the Crown. Private land prices vary depending on the proximity of the property to Whitehorse. Titled agricultural lands within 30 minutes from Whitehorse are valued at over \$3,000 per acre while land from 30 to 60 minutes from Whitehorse is valued around \$2,500 per acre. The price throughout the rest of the territory is approximately \$600 to \$1,000 per acre based on estimates from the Multiple Listing Service.

The Yukon is one of the few places in Canada where Crown land can be obtained for agricultural purposes. To qualify for Crown land, an applicant must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada, must be at least 19 years of age, and must have lived in the Yukon for at least one year prior to the date of application.

The process begins with an application to the Agriculture Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. The application must describe the intended uses of the land and the applicant must submit a Farm Development Plan (FDP) within 60 days of

making the land application. The FDP is a part of the application and must be approved by the Agriculture Branch. Applicants must also declare that they will retain their Yukon residency for the duration of any agricultural land agreement for sale that may result.

REVIEWS OF AGRICULTURE APPLICATIONS

The *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) lays out a comprehensive arms-length-from-government environmental assessment process. A YESAA review includes input from governments (including First Nations), interest groups and the public. Agriculture land applications are submitted to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) for determination of the environmental and socio-economic effects of the proposed project including cumulative effects. Review by YESAB is generally triggered by the section of the assessment regulations pertaining to clearing land using self-propelled power-driven equipment (Section 13.12). A YESAB review results in a recommendation that the proposed project either proceed, proceed with terms and conditions, or not proceed.

The recommendation from YESAB is considered by the Director of Agriculture who is the Delegated Decision Maker for the Yukon government on agriculture land and irrigation applications. The Director of Agriculture accepts, rejects or varies (accepts with some, usually minor, changes) the YESAB recommendation. A decision by the Director of Agriculture that the project proceed results in a letter of offer to the applicant and, following a survey of the applied-for parcel, the land is released to the applicant under an agreement for sale.

The agreement for sale is a development contract and the appraised value of the parcel becomes the purchase price. Under the *Vision of Yukon Agriculture: 2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy*, every dollar of approved development work completed by the applicant results in one dollar of the purchase price being forgiven. The total expenditure on approved agriculture developments must equal the appraised market value after any development costs incurred by the Government of Yukon are subtracted. If the applicant meets all the obligations of the agreement for sale within seven years or less, the Agreement is considered complete, and title issued.

AGRICULTURAL LAND APPLICATIONS

In 2005, the Agriculture Branch received 38 agricultural land applications. Ten new agreements for sale were issued, totalling 506.6 hectares, and 10 agricultural titles (which include agreements for sale from previous years) totalling 527.7 hectares were issued.

In 2006, the branch received 25 agricultural land applications. Ten new agreements for sale were issued, totalling 415.73 hectares, and seven agricultural titles (including agreements for sale from previous years) totalling 249.44 hectares.

In 2007, the branch received 25 agricultural land applications. Eight new agreements for sale were issued, totalling 347.42 hectares, and 13 agricultural titles (including agreements for sale from previous years) totalling 436.88 hectares were issued.

AGRICULTURE LAND PLANNING

The 2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy places an emphasis on the release of agricultural land through planned agricultural developments. Planned development is preferred because it:

- provides for coordinated use of infrastructure such as roads and electricity;
- places less demand on services such as school busing;
- allows for the orderly planning of future services; and
- allows agriculture to be developed in accordance with regional and sub-regional plans where they exist.

To date, 18 lots have been released in six lotteries. In October 2007, four lots in the Haines Junction Agriculture Subdivision were sold by lottery.

A fully cost-recoverable budget was established for the Agriculture Branch in August 1999 to facilitate agricultural land planning. This now allows basic infrastructure (roads and power) to be established prior to land sales.

The public, municipalities and First Nations will continue to be part of the planning process for planned agricultural areas. Background work is being carried out for further planned agricultural areas in several different locations.

Four more lots will be released from the Haines Junction agriculture subdivision in March 2008.

One 65-hectare parcel in the Stewart Valley — approximately 12 kilometres north of Stewart Crossing on the North Klondike Highway — will be proposed for survey in 2008.

GRAZING PROGRAM

To meet the grazing needs of Yukon livestock owners, the Government of Yukon grants grazing rights on designated areas of public land to eligible applicants. Grazing rights are given to the applicant in the form of a grazing agreement. Table 1 summarizes grazing program activities from 2005 to 2007.

Applications for grazing agreements are submitted to the Agriculture Branch for initial screening for conflicts with wildlife, existing land and resource uses, other land applications and aboriginal claims. The Agriculture Branch inspects the application area and assesses its suitability for grazing by determining the grazing capacity.

If the land included in the grazing application is suitable for grazing, further review will be required. Most grazing applications are subject to a YESAA assessment by the appropriate YESAA-designated office. The designated office will assess the project proposal and make

a recommendation to the Yukon government. If no major conflicts are identified through the review process and there is adequate graze, a grazing agreement can be issued. In cases where no fencing is required as part of the grazing management plan, the application will not be subject to YESAA and will instead undergo a review by the Agriculture Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

For each grazing agreement, the Agriculture Branch prepares a grazing management plan, which outlines management practices required for sustained grazing. Agriculture Branch personnel monitor grazing agreements throughout the tenure of the agreement to ensure compliance with grazing management plans.

In 2006 and 2007, a pilot study on the water quality on two grazing leases was conducted.

Table 1. Summary of grazing program activities during 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Number of...	2005	2006	2007
Grazing agreements under administration	40	39	38
Hectares under grazing agreements	11,412	11,248	11,075
Animal Unit Months* under grazing agreements	2470	2432	2412
Grazing applications received	3	3	0
New grazing agreements granted**	3	3	1
Average size of grazing agreements	285 ha	288 ha	291 ha
Smallest grazing agreement area	17.4 ha	22.4 ha	22.4 ha
Largest grazing agreement area	1,286 ha	1,286 ha	1,286 ha

*Animal Unit Months (AUM) is the amount of forage consumed by an adult cow or horse in one month.

**Not all grazing applications are approved in the year that they are received.



Yukon cattle. (Photo by Peter Long)

GROWING SEASON CONDITIONS

SEASONAL ANALYSIS

Yukon weather data recorded by Environment Canada and Yukon Government Community Services is used as a tool to determine agriculture potential in the Yukon. Weather data from stations located in agricultural areas is used to establish the growing season and compute effective growing degree days (EGDD), agricultural land capabilities, frost occurrences and seasonal precipitation. The growing season analysis has been broken down into four areas (Table 2).

- Whitehorse area, where the majority of the producers and consumers are located.
- Central Yukon, which is known to have a warmer climate. This area includes Dawson, the first agricultural area to be developed in the Yukon.
- Haines Junction, which was home to Agriculture Canada's research station from 1944 to 1968. This research station evaluated agriculture suitability for the area.
- Watson Lake, which is another suitable agricultural area of the Yukon and has a warmer climate and more precipitation than Whitehorse.

In the case of the Whitehorse area and central Yukon, multiple weather stations are used and the data are reported as an average for the areas. Precipitation is reported as the cumulative amounts from May to September. Growing season and effective growing degree days are calculated starting on the fifth consecutive day with mean temperatures above 5°C and ending the day of the first killing frost (-2.2°C) after July 15. Effective growing degree days (EGDD) are calculated from the growing degree days (GDD), which are a sum of all degrees greater than 5°C each day during the growing season. Effective growing degree days are adjusted by a factor related to day length to account for the boost in energy plants received from the long daylight hours.

Table 2. Climate summary for 2005-2007, for the Yukon agricultural areas. See Table 3 for more on “land capability class.”

Year		2005	2006	2007
Whitehorse area	Growing season	Apr. 25-Aug. 20	May 19-Sept. 16	May 18-Sept. 9
	Effective growing degree days	979	963	1,031
	Land capability class	Class 4	Class 4	Class 4
	Precipitation (mm)	190	145	185
Central Yukon	Growing season	Apr. 25-Aug. 29	May 6-Sept. 10	May 2-Sept. 21
	Effective growing degree days	1,114	1,224	1,431
	Land capability class	Class 3	Class 2	Class 1
	Precipitation (mm)	168	160	176
Haines Junction	Growing season	Apr. 27- Sept.1	May 20-Aug. 30	May 22-Aug. 28
	Effective growing degree days	*	773	816
	Land capability class	*	Class 5	Class 5
	Precipitation (mm)	*	*	197
Watson Lake	Growing season	Apr. 23-Sept. 26	May 19-Sept. 15	May 17-Sept. 30
	Effective growing degree days	1,197	1,103	1,171
	Land capability class	Class 3	Class 3	Class 3
	Precipitation (mm)	259	219	321

*incomplete data

The total EGDD equates to the land capability class for each of the areas, with Class 1 being best and class 7 worst (Table 3). For more information, refer to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Land Suitability Rating system for Agriculture Crops (Technical Bulletin 1995-6E).

Table 3. Definitions and operational constraints of land capability classes for cultivated agriculture in the Yukon.

Class 1	1400-1600 EGDD	These lands have no significant limitations that restrict the production of the full range of common Canadian agricultural crops.
Class 2	1200-1400 EGDD	These lands have slight limitations that restrict the range of some crops but still allow the production of grain and warm season vegetables.
Class 3	1050-1200 EGDD	These lands have moderate limitations that restrict the range of crops to small grain cereals and vegetables.
Class 4	900-1050 EGDD	These lands have severe limitations that restrict the range of crops to forage production, marginal grain production and cold-hardy vegetables.
Class 5	700-900 EGDD	These lands have very severe limitations that restrict the range of crops to forages, improved pastures and cold-hardy vegetables.
Class 6	<700 EGDD	These lands have such severe limitations for cultivated agriculture that cropping is not feasible. These lands may be suitable for native grazing.
Class 7		These lands have no capability for cultivated agriculture or range for domestic animals.

Weather summaries

2005

This was a normal year for the Whitehorse area as seen by the Class 4 land capability, although frost sensitive crops would be challenged by 25 light frost occurrences during the growing season. For the central Yukon, 2005 was on the cooler side, resulting in a Class 3 land capability. Watson Lake had the warmest average temperature and most precipitation for 2005. Data for Haines Junction was incomplete; the data that were available indicated an early start to the growing season.

2006

All areas of the Yukon experienced lower levels of precipitation for 2006, which resulted in increase stress to dryland crops and amplified demand for irrigation. The central Yukon was the warmest area, reaching a Class 2 land capability, followed by Class 3 in Watson Lake and Class 4 in the Whitehorse area. Haines Junction was the coolest of all the agricultural areas with only 773 EGDD due to the late start to the season and high incidence of frosts in 2006.

2007

This was an exceptional year for the central Yukon as the area reached a land capability of Class 1, therefore having no significant limitations to common Canadian agricultural crops. The central Yukon experienced a warmer than normal summer along with a growing season that extended into the second half of September. Watson Lake also experienced a long growing season, although this did not result in a higher land capability class. Over 300 millimetres of rain fell in Watson Lake (the most over the three years). Whitehorse and Haines Junction, although slightly warmer in 2007, did not see an increase in land capabilities; both remained at Class 4 and Class 5, respectively.

SUMMARY

The central Yukon and Watson Lake area have shown the best agroclimatic capabilities. The central Yukon was warmer, providing good growing conditions and allowing for a wider variety of crop options. The benefit of the Watson Lake area is the combination of warm seasonal temperatures, and higher precipitation. Precipitation is a limiting factor for Yukon agriculture and yields can be significantly increased with irrigation. Production in the Whitehorse area and in Haines Junction have climatic restrictions that have been overcome by the resourcefulness of agricultural producers and their awareness of each area's climate.

PRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Yukon agricultural production has been steady over the past five years, with similar gross annual sales reported in the 2006 census as were reported in 2001. There are a number of agricultural products available on store shelves and through the vibrant Fireweed Community Market. The agricultural industry continues to fill niche markets and, in some cases, provide retail products at local grocery stores.

The majority of farming activity occurs around the Whitehorse area because of access to markets and off-farm income; unfortunately, as noted in the climate section, Whitehorse experiences a cooler summer climate than most other areas of the Yukon making some crops difficult to produce.

The Agriculture Branch received figures from the 2006 Census of Agriculture for the Yukon on May 16, 2007; these statistics provided insight into changes in the industry. The total farm numbers followed the trend in other Canadian jurisdictions, dropping from 170 in the 2001 census to 148 in 2006 (Table 4). The total area in production also fell to 10,125 hectares (25,020 acres; Table 5). With fewer farms and acres under cultivation, there was a levelling out of the gross annual revenue at just over four million dollars (Figure 4) and there has been a substantial increase in the value of farm capital up to 66 million dollars.

In the 2006 census, the count of farms classified by industry group (Table 4) shows that the number of farms reporting has dropped, with most of the change in “other animal production,” which fell from 65 to 44. In the Yukon, this category includes sled dog breeding operations, horse outfitting and rigging, and game farming. Game farming suffered through the loss of the breeding market; in the absence of the breeding market, the industry is targetting the lower-value meat and velvet antler markets.

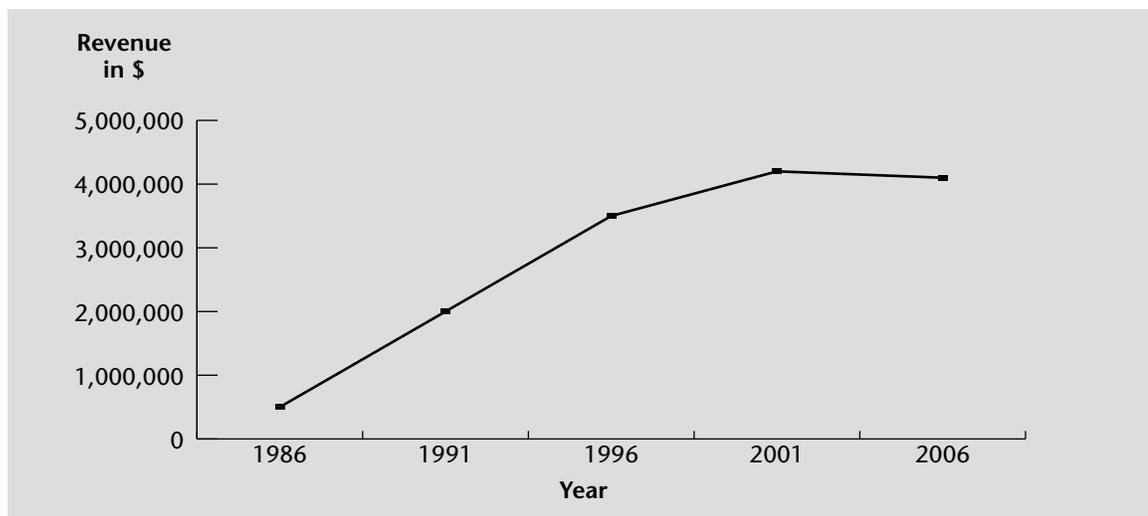


Figure 4. Gross annual revenues.

Table 4. Farms classified by industry group, census years 2006 and 2001

	2006	2001
Other crop farming (hay and greenfeed)	46	51
Other animal production	44	65
Greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production	22	22
Vegetable and melon farming	12	7
Poultry and egg production	10	14
Oilseed and grain farming	5	5
Fruit and tree-nut farming	4	3
Cattle ranching and farming	2	2
Hog and pig farming	2	1
Total	148	170

While the total farm area dropped from 11,865 hectares (29,318 acres) to 10,125 hectares (25,020 acres; Table 5), the drop is accounted for in less natural land for pasture (i.e. grazing) by 1,306 hectares (3,228 acres) and titled woodlands on farms by 577 hectares (1,425 acres). The total area in crops and seeded pasture has increased from 3,219 hectares (7,955 acres) in 2001 to 3,370 hectares (8,327 acres) in 2006 with 22 fewer farms reporting. There was also an increase in irrigated acres from 565 hectares (1,395 acres) in 2001 to 749 hectares (1,851 acres) in 2006.

Table 5. Agricultural land use, census years 2006 and 2001.

	Land use			
	2006		2001	
	farms reporting	hectares (acres)	farms reporting	hectares (acres)
Land in crops (excluding Christmas tree area)	101	2,658 (6,567)	108	2,839 (7,015)
Summerfallow land	11	206 (508)	11	212 (525)
Tame or seeded pasture	32	712 (1,760)	24	380 (940)
Natural land for pasture	43	2,899 (7,163)	55	4,205 (10,391)
All other land (including land for Christmas trees, woodlands and wetlands)	137	3,651 (9,022)	160	4,228 (10,447)
Totals	148	10,125 (25,020)	170	11,865 (29,318)

Highlights from the 2006 census

- There has been an increase in land used for vegetables from 9.7 to 15 hectares (24 to 37 acres) and fruit (berries) from 4.5 to 9.7 hectares (11 to 24 acres).
- There has been an increase in the number of organic agricultural producers. Twenty-six farms indicate that they follow organic practices.
- Farm capital, including all land and buildings, was reported to be valued at over \$66,000,000, an increase of close to \$16,000,000 on 22 fewer farms.
- There has been an increase in crops and seeded pastures, from 3,219 to 3,370 hectares (7,955 to 8,327 acres).
- There has also been an increase in irrigated acreage to 749 hectares (1,851 acres).
- There was a marked increase in the number of farms reporting higher capital value in 2006. In 2001, there were no farms reporting capital value over \$1.5 million, while in 2006, eight farms reported capital value in excess of \$1.5 million.



A view of the Fireweed Community Market from the bluffs on the north side of the Yukon River.

PRODUCTION SECTORS

Livestock

Livestock is broken into different species. These species are grown for various reasons including animals that are slaughtered for meat, such as hogs, elk, cattle and bison (reported as bovine), goats and sheep; animals that are used for work such as horses; and animals that are used for dairy such as cattle and goats. See Figure 5 for estimated gross farm income from each sector.

- **Cattle**

According to the 2006 Census of Agriculture, there were 220 cattle and calves in the territory. The beef cattle industry has had slow growth over the years. However, with the new mobile abattoir, the southern Yukon red meat industry has been able to sell inspected products to retail markets. The expectation is that the increased marketing opportunities offered by an inspected product will lead to an increase in cattle production.

- **Hogs**

Hog production in the Yukon is a small industry, with seven farms reporting 160 hogs in the last census. Hog production is sold at the farm gate and is part of a mixed farm operation at present.

- **Horses**

The 2006 census indicated that there are 629 horses in the Yukon on 58 farms. This is a decrease from the last census and is also lower than the 2003 horse owners survey, which indicated there were 1,750 horses in the territory. The difference in numbers is accounted for by horses that are not located on farms surveyed as part of the census, but that are work horses for outfitting or pleasure horses and that eat local forage.

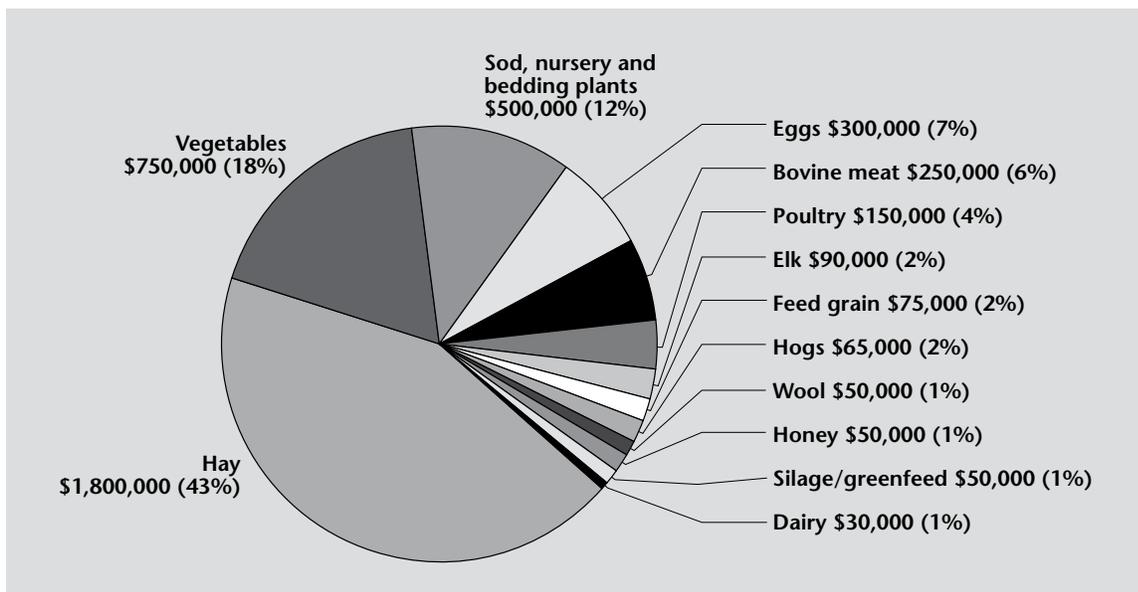


Figure 5. Estimated distribution of gross farm income by sector. (Source: Multi-Year Development Plan)

- **Elk**

The elk industry continues to be affected by low breeding stock sales. The industry has transformed itself into predominantly meat sales with some sale of antler velvet. In the 2006 census, four farms reported 74 animals.

- **Bison**

One farm reported over 100 wood bison. These animals are mostly sold as meat, but they also provide high quality breeding stock as well.

- **Goats and sheep**

There are a number of goats in the Yukon, used for both dairy and fibre. Seven farms reported 113 animals in the last census and two farms reported sheep, though no numbers were noted.

- **Llamas**

This exotic, domestic livestock sector started to develop in the mid-1990s and has remained relatively static since. Five farms reported 21 animals in the 2006 census. The animals are raised for breeding and fibre, and as pack animals.

Poultry

- **Meat birds**

The meat poultry industry is a farm-gate industry with production on a seasonal basis, with producers cycling through one or two flocks per year. In the 2006 Census of Agriculture, there were sales of 9,698 kilograms of meat representing about 3,750 chickens. Fourteen farms reported chickens. There has been a decrease in the number of birds since the last census because of the drop in production in the central Yukon. The potential market is high as Yukoners consume approximately 500,000 birds per year. Poultry meat is marketed at \$4 per pound or, for certified organic meat, up to \$6 per pound. The recent purchase of a mobile chicken processing unit should help offset the temporary closure of the Partridge Creek abattoir, reduce the work load associated with on-farm slaughter, thereby increasing the number of meat birds raised and slaughtered in the territory.

- **Eggs**

Overall egg production has decreased as a result of reduced production in the central Yukon. According to the 2006 census, there were 3,886 layers producing approximately 75,000 eggs with 23 producers reporting. Eggs typically sell for \$4 per dozen.

- **Turkeys**

In the last census, nine farms reported raising turkeys. Total production was 1,933 kilograms from about 500 birds.

Field crops

- **Grain**

The production of cereal grains (barley, oats, wheat) in the Yukon is primarily limited by the market and, in the case of wheat, climatic conditions. Barley and oat grain production has increased in the Whitehorse area to supply feed for livestock. Currently, the barley and oat acreage is approximately 120 acres. An increase in the livestock sector, especially hogs and chickens, would lead to increased demand for local grain production, which would increase grain acreage. Wheat production is possible in the central Yukon and could provide the wheat that is necessary to make a feed mix with appropriate nutrients and vitamins for animal growth needs.

- **Greenfeed**

Greenfeed involves the production of oats, and sometimes barley and fall rye, as forage crops. This has always been an important component of fodder for Yukon livestock. Oats are most often used and harvested in bundles or bales. Acres in oat greenfeed was 1,300 based on the 2006 Census of Agriculture.

- **Forage crops**

Hay production is the single largest agricultural product grown in the Yukon, both in terms of acreage and value. Over 1,800 hectares (4,400 acres) of hay are produced annually. According to the recently completed Multi-Year Development Plan, Serecon Consulting estimates that this sector yields 1.8 million dollars in gross annual revenue



Oat bundles at Aurora Mountain Farm.

and that there is still room for expansion. With the purchase of a bale wrapper in 2005, producers have been able to wrap bales producing a haylage or silage product.

Vegetables and berries

The production of vegetables is an important and growing component of Yukon agriculture. The 100 Mile Diet and the trend towards eating locally has helped Yukon food producers. Over 20 different vegetables are produced in the Yukon. Approximately 15 hectares (37 acres) are devoted to vegetable production and 2,122 square metres are in greenhouse area. Potato production has increased substantially from 12 hectares (30 acres) in 2001 to 24 hectares (59 acres) in the 2006. Acres in berries, predominantly saskatoons and raspberries, has increased from 4.5 to 9.7 hectares (11 to 24 acres).

Nurseries and bedding plants

The nursery and bedding plants for local flower beds and landscaping are produced by a number of local producers. There are 2,700 square metres in greenhouse flower production and another 5 hectares (12 acres) outdoors in production. This sector has grown slightly since the last Census and continues to offer high quality, hardy plants for the Yukon.

Other sectors

There are a number of other sectors that produce specialty products for consumers, including sod, goat cheese, honey and birch syrup. One sod producer operates in the territory and has been successful at meeting the needs of Yukon landscapers, as well as for shipments into Alaska. Delectable goat cheese is produced at a certified processing kitchen which opened in 2005. Honey production in the Yukon is harvested from a variety of pollen sources, but the most prized is the fireweed (*Epilobium spp.*). The incidence of forest fires around the Whitehorse area has been low the past three years, leading to fewer fireweed blooms. Three farms reported honey production in the 2006 Census. Birch syrup is produced in the central Yukon. Many of these products are available through the Fireweed Community Market.



A hive frame covered in bees at Yukon Wild Things.

YUKON AGRICULTURE BRANCH

The Yukon Agriculture Branch was established on April 1, 1986, with a staff of one part-time and two full-time employees. With the growth of the agricultural sector over the past decade, the branch has grown to seven permanent employees, including a Director, Administrative Assistant, Agriculture Development Officer, Agrologist, Agriculture Research Technician, Agriculture Land Coordinator and a Land Resources Officer. There is also one auxiliary Grazing Management Coordinator and one auxiliary on-call Meat Inspector.

STAFF

The **Director** is responsible for the overall management and administration of the branch. Duties include developing policy and regulations, developing and managing the budget and finances, administering industry programs, supervising staff, and meeting with the public, both in the office and on their farms.

The responsibilities of the **Administrative Assistant** include administrative support to the employees of the Agriculture Branch, its activities and programs, and to the Agriculture Canada office. This person greets the public when they arrive at the branch office, and assists them or refers them to the proper staff member. The Administrative Assistant also plays an active role in planning conferences, seminars and other extension functions.

The **Agriculture Development Officer** is responsible for land inspection under agreements for sale, on-farm extension services, coordination of poundkeepers, and coordination



Agriculture Branch staff taken on retreat day. Left to right, front row: Matt Ball, Patricia Smith, Bradley Barton, Sonia Gay; back row: Jeff O'Farrell, Darlee Norquay, Kevin Bowers, David Murray, Tony Hill, Edward Lee, Valerie Whelan.

of livestock control measures as well as the Canada Plans Service and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration activities in the Yukon. This person also assists land applicants with the development of farm management plans, and attends committee meetings addressing land-related issues.

The **Agrologist** is responsible for the design and management of the Agriculture Branch research and demonstration program, farm production and marketing-related extension work, as well as publication of the branch quarterly newsletter, InFARMation, and yearly research reports. The Agrologist also works throughout the year on educational seminars, courses and conferences for growers and producers.

The **Agriculture Research Technician** assists in research plot establishment, maintenance and harvest, as well as data collection, summarization and database compilation. This person helps in developing and implementing new research projects, and is responsible for setting up and monitoring test site weather stations. The agriculture technician also assists in writing research reports, state of the industry reports and the branch quarterly newsletter, InFARMation.

The **Agricultural Land Coordinator** receives, processes and tracks agricultural and grazing applications, and maintains a database of the applications. This person also administers grazing lease agreements, in co-operation with the Grazing Management Coordinator, and agricultural agreements for sale, in co-operation with the Agriculture Development Officer. Other work includes working with the Land Resources Officer in receiving and processing land inquiries and applications and providing support in all agricultural land matters and planned agriculture, administering and providing support in agricultural projects under YESAA assessment, preparing agricultural and grazing agreement documents, raising title to completed farm developments and providing other support and assistance to the Agriculture Branch.

The **Land Resources Officer** evaluates planned agriculture areas for suitability and proposes sites for development. This person provides technical support to the Agriculture Land Program by evaluating agricultural capability of land applications, and deals with specific land application issues on a case-by-case basis, as well as providing expertise in soil-related extension activities.

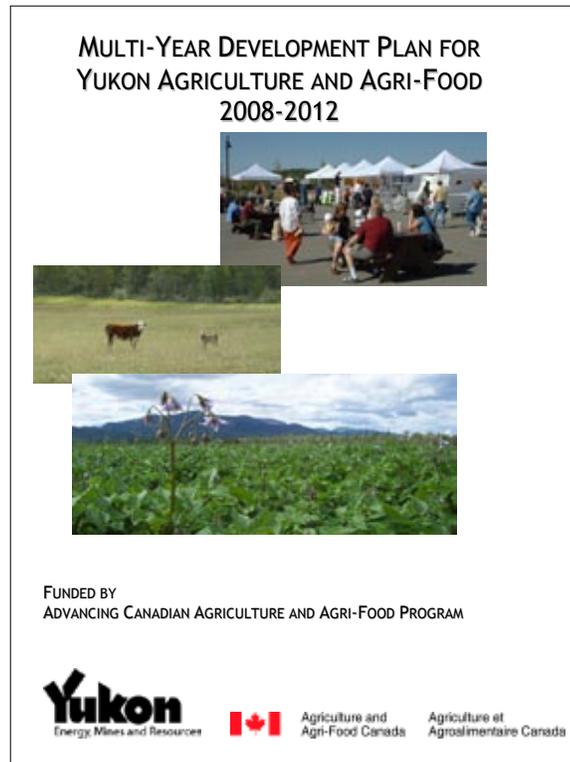
The **Grazing Management Coordinator** develops conditions of lease for grazing leases, and identifies and evaluates plant species and natural vegetation communities on grazing agreement lands. This person is also responsible for range improvement programs, grazing management agreement development (conditions of lease) and administration, and related extension work.

The **Meat Inspector** is responsible for inspecting meat and poultry during slaughtering in the abattoir, and checking for disease and quality to ensure consumer safety. This person also advises livestock producers on animal health and nutrition, and production of quality meats.

EXTENSION/PRODUCTION SERVICES

The Agriculture Branch provides advice to farmers in all aspects of farm management, production, marketing, conservation techniques, new farm technology, and farm financing, with on-farm and in-office consultations. These services provide a link between new research and on-farm application and include assistance with land development, soil conservation, irrigation, building and fence design, regulatory services and programs. The branch also provides advice to farmers seeking agricultural land to start or expand a commercial farm enterprise that focuses on products that are agronomically viable and economically attractive.

A new multi-year development plan provides direction in this regard. The Agriculture Branch, with support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the Yukon agriculture and agri-food industry, hired Serecon Management Consulting Inc. to develop the plan. It examined market potentials, barriers to agricultural development in the Yukon, current and potential economic impacts of the agriculture and agri-food sectors, and the potential of the industry and how to attain these targets. Consideration was given to demand and supply issues, including but not limited to, retail and other marketing regimes, profitability and competitive factors, climatic and transportation issues, production, processing, and distribution capabilities. The plan was completed in November 2007 and is available through the Agriculture Branch office or website at www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture.



The branch has a number of other resources available to farmers. The branch library will also arrange for access to the publications, books and magazines in the Energy, Mines and Resources library, located on the third floor of the Elijah Smith Building.

Since 1987, the quarterly bulletin, InFARMation, has been produced by the Agriculture Branch to keep producers updated on industry activities and events. The newsletter contains articles on crops, production services, livestock husbandry, industry trends, and on research. Circulation was approximately 900 in 2007 with a quarter of them being distributed electronically.

Canada Plan Service materials are available through the Agriculture Branch office which has copies of over 100 publications on the construction of agricultural facilities, such as most farm buildings, root cellars, livestock shelters and grain storage.

The branch continues to run an extensive soil, feed and water testing program. Commercial farmers can submit samples for analysis. Nutrient analysis is conducted on contract with a lab from Alberta or Manitoba. In the 2005, 2006 and 2007 seasons, over 200 soil samples were analyzed. The feed, soil and forage testing service is one of the branch's most popular programs. Farmers can determine if their soils, feeds or water sources are deficient in any important nutrients and take corrective action.

Extension services address all types of production methods for crops, forages, pastures, livestock and game farming. Topics covered include equipment uses, grazing management and control, fertilization, disease, pest control, processing and storage techniques.

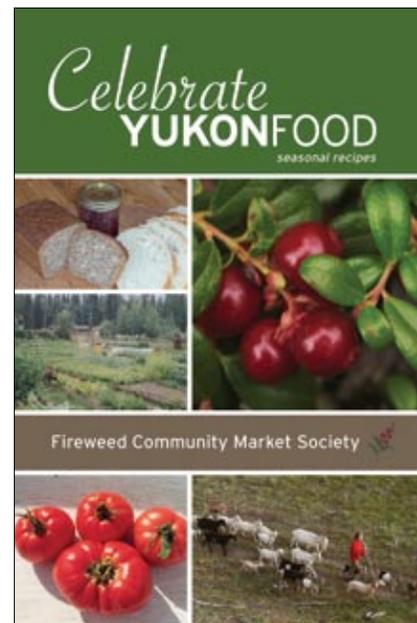
Marketing

Over the past three years, Yukon agriculture product marketing has been predominantly undertaken by the industry associations. Some of the best marketing occurs at the community markets, both in Whitehorse and Dawson. The Growers of Organic Food produced a "Yukon eat local" t-shirt and the Fireweed Community Market produced a well-received recipe book detailing local farms and local foods. The Yukon Agriculture Association undertook a number of ads in papers explaining the importance of eating locally.

The Agriculture Branch helps identify products that are viable, show good profit potential and are most suitable and marketable for commercial agricultural producers, taking into account location, soils, climate and capabilities. Marketing support is provided in areas of distribution, packaging, pricing, advertising and displaying merchandise.

The branch also undertakes to market Yukon agricultural products through the InFARMation newsletter.

In 2005 and 2006, the Agriculture Branch continued to help with the Klondike Harvest Fair. (The fair was not held in 2007.) The Klondike Harvest Fair has been a major annual public awareness initiative of the Yukon Agricultural Association. The fair is usually held over a weekend in August on the Whitehorse waterfront. The bench show is a major attraction for both exhibitors of crafts and agricultural products and the thousands of people attending the fair each year. In addition to the bench show, there is a farmer's market, midway, livestock display, entertainment and food concessions.



Other smaller community fairs also took place. The Watson Lake fall fair has been an annual event in the community since 1994. Other fall fairs held during this time frame were held in Carmacks, Mount Lorne, Dawson City and Faro.

Seminars and symposia

The North of 60° Agriculture Conference is the main agricultural seminar held every year. It is organized by the Agriculture Branch and co-sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. This seminar provides an opportunity for local producers to share their experiences and hear from experts on a variety of topics.

The 2005 conference focused on the new funding programs offered by the Agriculture Policy Framework and included a seminar on farm succession, renewal, environment, risk management and the Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization (CAIS) program, the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) and organic production standards.

The 2006 conference focused on soil health with respect to some of the chemical, biological and physical indicators, including nutrient cycling, fertilizer management and organic matter. Attendees heard from Steve Sparrow of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, whose primary research interests include management of high latitude agricultural soils, nutrient cycling (especially nitrogen) in high latitude soils and forage crop production in Alaska. Art Bomke of the University of British Columbia, spoke about soil test interpretations and the importance of having fertilizer recommendations that accurately reflect the environment in which they are to be applied.

The 2007 conference was moved to a larger venue — the High Country Inn — to celebrate the 20th anniversary. The focus was on future pathways of northern agriculture. The



Dawson City farmers market.

speakers presented information on Yukon agricultural programming, organic certification, the multi-year development plan, weed management and genetically modified organisms. Linda Hall and Neil Harker, guest speakers from Alberta, provided detailed information about weed management and stimulated a good debate about genetically modified organisms.

Master Gardener course

The Master Gardener course was offered in both 2005 and 2006; 48 students received their certificates of completion, bringing the total number of Yukon Master Gardeners to over 170. The course began in 1997 with help from the Alaska Cooperative Extension Service. Each year, local gardening experts and Agriculture Branch staff instruct 25 experienced northern gardeners. Students are provided with the training and are asked to commit 40 hours of volunteer time to the community to educate other gardeners. A society of master gardeners was formed in 2003 to help connect the graduates and other gardeners.

RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION

The Agriculture Branch has maintained a research farm at the Gunner Nilsson and Mickey Lammers Research Forest since 1988. The initial thrust was to test a wide variety of crops for suitability and to act as a demonstration site for Yukon agriculture. Over the years, the site has continued crop variety assessments along with evaluations of soil conservation techniques, soil enrichment practices, and irrigation optimization. Today, research and demonstrations continue in the key areas of variety evaluation and demonstration; soil enhancements and management; technologies and management practices; and economics of production.

Generally, research and demonstration projects fall into more than one of the key areas and are therefore reported individually. It should also be noted that not all the research is done at the research farm: projects have been conducted in partnership with other farms and in various areas of the Yukon. The partnerships take advantage of on-farm expertise, and the variation in sites gives insight into the diverse climates in the Yukon and the potential that may exist in other areas beyond the research farm.

In 2005, forage demonstration plots were set up to assess yield and hardiness of 16 forage species. The work is ongoing; initial results show various levels of establishment, over-winter survival and yields.

Since the establishment of the raspberry orchard in 2002, the orchard has matured, and yields continued to increase. In the orchard, a variety assessment is being conducted along with an evaluation of irrigation technology and fertilizer levels. The irrigation technology is a computer-controlled irrigation system that uses soil moisture and evapotranspiration data to optimize the delivery of water. Through this irrigation system, fertilizer levels are adjusted to determine the effect that lower levels of nitrogen addition will have on

raspberry yields. The yields are then used to assess the economical opportunity that may or may not exist in raspberry orchards.

As part of a biofuels initiative, a new project was initiated in 2006 to determine if oilseeds can be grown in the Yukon for use in bio-diesel. The Agriculture Branch set out to determine if a canola, flax or a relatively unknown oilseed, *Camelina sativa*, can be grown here and what levels of oil can be obtained from these crops. Results from 2006 and 2007 show that it is possible to mature and obtain acceptable yields from a Polish canola and the *Camelina sativa*; work continues to determine year-to-year reproducibility of all these crops.

A variety assessment was conducted on carrots in 2007, evaluating the production of 10 different carrot varieties. The carrot evaluation not only looks at variety difference, but also calculates yield values to determine what potential income could be achieved from planting carrots.

In 2007, a trial was conducted to evaluate different management practices for potatoes. The trial evaluated seeding depths and timing of fertilizer application. Results showed that a conventional single application of fertilizer works best and seeding depth does have a noticeable impact on yields although not significantly different.

Row cover evaluations have been conducted on strawberries, potato and raspberries to determine if yields could be increased by extending the season and or by increasing soil and air temperatures around these crops. In some cases, the row cover was also a form of weed control.

As technology continues to change, the Agriculture Branch has been taking advantage of new, easier to use and less expensive weather stations, data recorders and sensors to evaluate growing conditions. Data tracked include air and soil temperature, evapotranspiration rate, precipitation and soil moisture. This work is ongoing and increases the Agriculture Branch's understanding of climate and its relationship to plant growth.

A study was initiated in 2005 to examine the nitrogen fixation of alfalfa in mixed grass and monoculture stands. The highest level of nitrogen fixation was achieved by a mixed alfalfa and timothy stand with no nitrogen fertilizer. This treatment achieved nitrogen fixing rates over 90 kilograms per hectare. Alfalfa yield in this crop was over 3,000 kilograms per hectare.

Another research study conducted in 2005 summarized the available information on elk nutrition and habitat. The research was based on a literature review, experience and other resources, and was published in a report called *The Nutritional and Habitat Requirements of Elk*. The report outlined the nutritional requirements of elk during various life stages and included topics such as maintenance, growth and reproduction.

Results for research and demonstration trials can be found in the yearly Yukon Agriculture Research and Demonstration progress reports. Copies can be obtained on line at www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture/publications, or at the Agriculture Branch front counter.

DISEASE MONITORING

The Yukon Agriculture Branch works with other government departments and industry to monitor animal and plant diseases. Plant disease concerns should be brought to the attention of the Yukon Agrologist at 867-667-5838. Animal disease concerns should be brought to the attention of a local veterinarian.

The Yukon Agriculture Branch also oversees the national Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) program for Yukon cervids. In 2003, the Yukon government implemented both a Mandatory Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Program and a Voluntary Chronic Wasting Disease Certification Program. These programs provide a framework for CWD monitoring. This provides assurance to the national and international markets that the Yukon has no CWD in game-farmed cervids. Testing from 2001-2007 shows that Yukon game-farmed elk are CWD free.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure development for the industry revolved around the purchase of a mobile abattoir facility to provide inspected slaughter services to southern Yukon red meat producers. A number of other pieces of equipment were also purchased including a bale wrapper, an irrigation pipe press, fertilizer storage bins and poultry processing equipment.

The Yukon government provides meat inspection services at two territorial licensed facilities: Partridge Creek, and the mobile abattoir facility located in the southern Yukon, to ensure all territorial regulations and health guidelines are met.

Farmers are responsible for marketing their product to retailers, either directly or through arrangements with the meat processor.

Partridge Creek abattoir

In 2005 to 2006, the abattoir at Partridge Creek did at least two white meat slaughters and one red meat slaughter. Approximately 600 birds and 10 cattle were slaughtered. In 2007, there was at least one white meat slaughter of about 400 birds and there were about 10 cattle slaughtered.

Mobile abattoir

On August 27, 2006, the first Canadian mobile abattoir opened in the Yukon. The abattoir, fully equipped with chilling facilities, is housed in a fifth-wheel custom built for three-season use. The Yukon government purchased the unit for \$175,000 from Tait's Custom Trailer Sales, a locally operated business.

The U.S.-built Featherlite Fifth Wheel, custom designed for Yukon conditions, provides slaughter, inspection and refrigerated transportation services for the red meat industry, including slaughter of cattle, bison, hogs, elk, sheep and goats. The operation and maintenance of the mobile abattoir has been contracted to Art Lock of Whitehorse. As a former Yukon hog farmer and outfitter, he has slaughtering experience, as well as the mechanical expertise to maintain both the fifth wheel unit and his own truck unit.

The mobile abattoir (Table 6) provides refrigerated transportation to a meat processor for cold storage, aging, butchering and wrapping services.

Table 6. Abattoir slaughter

Species	2006		2007	
	Farmgate	Retail	Farmgate	Retail
beef	21		18	2
elk		1		1
bison				3



Mobile abattoir.

Producers and businesses interested in using the services of this unit should contact Kevin Bowers at the Agriculture Branch. For those who have used the mobile abattoir, please make arrangements for slaughter services by contacting Art Lock at 867-393-4978 or by email at lock@northwestel.net.

Bale wrapper

The round bale wrapper arrived in time for the 2005 season and played an important role in the decisions made around harvesting hay and greenfeed crops. The ability to plan the harvest around a schedule not totally directed by rainfall is a valuable option. At each farm, the wrapper has been stationary on solid, flat ground and the bales have been transported to it for wrapping. The moisture level in the finished bales is between 30% and 45%. Another great benefit is that the wrapped bales can be stored outside without the need for a shed or tarping. The round bale wrapper was funded through the APF Renewal Diversification and Value Added Initiative.

Irrigation pipe press

The irrigation pipe press arrived in the fall of 2005 and was jointly purchased by 11 partners with funding from the APF Renewal Diversification and Value Added Initiative. Seven farmers used the press in 2006 and 2007. It worked very well and was ordered with special dies to allow a broken pipe to be repaired without any additional fittings, requiring



Bale wrapper.

only a repair band and epoxy. The initial purchase included bands for all the different sizes of pipe, from two to 12 inches, and the epoxy, along with extra stock. The unit, dies, pipe stands, tools and bands are all self-contained on a trailer with tool boxes so it can move from farm to farm. The unit has a 15-metre cord on the motor switch for plugging in to a power source at the farm.

Other

Another successful infrastructure project was the installation of fertilizer storage bins. Seven producer sites were chosen in 2004: five in the Whitehorse area and one each in Mayo and Watson Lake. The fertilizer bins continue to be used for bulk fertilizer storage, allowing shipping of greater quantities of fertilizer, which in turn, reduces the cost of shipping. Shipping is generally equal to the unit cost of the fertilizer. These sites stored over 310 tonnes of fertilizer for Yukon producers in 2007.

A group of poultry farmers applied for and received funding for mobile poultry processing equipment to be used on-farm for white meat producers. By the end of 2007, almost 1,000 birds had been processed with this equipment.



Chickens processed with the mobile poultry processing equipment.

FUNDING PROGRAMS

AGRICULTURE POLICY FRAMEWORK

At the 2001 annual meeting of agriculture ministers and deputy ministers in Whitehorse, a commitment was made by all provinces and territories to develop an umbrella framework for national agricultural programming. This became known as the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF). By signing onto the APF, the Yukon became eligible for up to \$321,000 of federal funding per year from April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2008. The funds are matched by the territory on a 60/40 federal/territorial split.

The agreement includes five areas: business risk management, environment, renewal, food safety and quality, and science and innovation.

Business risk management

The business risk management programs revolve around the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program (CAIS) and its successor, AgriStability.

In November 2004, Yukon signed an agreement with Canada to offer CAIS to eligible Yukon producers. The decision to enter CAIS was based on a thorough assessment of Yukon agriculture industry needs. It was chosen as the risk management tool most suitable to the diversity of farming in the territory.

The CAIS program was established to provide income protection and disaster assistance to Canadian farmers. The program is based on a farm's production margin, that is, farm revenue minus expenses. Payments are triggered when the current year's margin falls below the established historical margin, providing a boost to farm income back towards that farm's average.

Between 2004 and 2007, the CAIS program was amended 11 times to improve delivery and responsiveness to producers. The last amendment in 2007 saw the top tier (15%) of income loss being replaced by a government/producer savings account called AgriInvest. In this tier, producers can access funds in their accounts to manage risk before it is triggered by income loss.

The program for the Yukon is administered by the CAIS office in Winnipeg. The role of the Agriculture Branch here is to provide information on the program and direct inquiries to the Winnipeg office (1-800-367-8506) where experts are available to provide answers and direction on how to apply to enter the CAIS program.

In December 2007, the Yukon joined the provinces and the federal government in signing an agreement to launch a new suite of business risk management programs that would be retroactively offered for 2007. The new programs are part of *Growing Forward*, the new policy framework that replaces the Agricultural Policy Framework for Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products industry.

The Business Risk Management section of the policy includes AgriInvest, for farmer accounts; AgriStability, an improved margin-based program; AgriInsurance, a crop and production insurance; and AgriRecovery, a new disaster relief framework.

With agreements in place to implement the new suite, the federal government contributed \$600 million in funds to kickstart new AgriInvest farmer accounts. With AgriInvest deposits, farmers make deposits based on a percentage of allowable net sales of eligible commodities and receive a matching government contribution. Farmers have the choice to withdraw the money to cover small margin declines (15% or less), or to make investments to mitigate risks or improve market income.

AgriStability provides support when a producer experiences larger income losses. The program covers declines of more than 15% in a producer's average income in the previous five years. AgriStability replaces the main body of the previous CAIS program under APF.

AgriInsurance is an existing program which includes insurance against production losses for specified perils (such as weather, pests and disease). This program is being expanded to include more commodities.

AgriRecovery is a disaster-relief framework which provides a coordinated process for the federal and territorial governments to respond rapidly when disasters strike, filling gaps not covered by existing programs.

There are seven farms enrolled in the Yukon CAIS program.

Environment

The Environment programs revolve around scanning agricultural regions to determine broad agri-environmental risks, as well as individual plans for specific farms. The farm planning process allows producers to understand their natural risks (the soil and site characteristics of their operations), to understand and assess their management practices, and to develop a plan of action to address high-risk situations. At the end of 2007, the Yukon had 25 enrolled participants and seven completed plans.

With completed plans, producers are eligible for funding under the Farm Stewardship program. For more information, please refer to the APF program guide.

Renewal

The Renewal program has been one of the most successful programs in terms of program uptake and dollars expended. There are six Yukon renewal programs (Table 7) available to Yukon producers, in addition to four national renewal initiatives.

These four national renewal initiatives (Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services, Specialized Business Planning Services, Planning and Assessment for Value-Added Enterprises and Canadian Agriculture Skills Services) are available to agriculture and agri-food producers in the Yukon.

The Yukon programs provide learning, mentorship and marketing opportunities on farm development and increased earnings potential. The national programs provide assessment and consultation services, help develop new skills and knowledge, and provide planning tools for farmers.

Table 7. Yukon renewal programs, 2005 to 2007.

Program	Project costs (\$)
Human Resource Development Initiative	209,000
New Entrants Development Initiative	5,000
Market Development Initiative	133,000
Agriculture Development Initiative	5,000
Diversification and Value Added Initiative	41,000
Land Enhancement Initiative	18,000

Food safety and quality

Food safety and quality programs are designed to provide support for developing and implementing initiatives that identify and/or minimize food safety risks or otherwise increase the safety of food produced in the Yukon. This includes the safety of people working in the industry who might be exposed to various risks inherent in the industry. The initiatives include:

- creating, implementing and partnering with the agriculture industry and individual processors to develop food safety strategies;
- developing and implementing traceability systems that are complimentary to the National Traceability Policy;
- implementing regulatory compliance for food and health issues associated with farm business activities; and
- creating, implementing and partnering with industry to increase utilization of standardized processing facilities.

Over \$500,000 has been expended in five territorial initiatives: Food Safety Strategies Initiative; Regulatory Compliance of Food Safety Initiative; Traceability Initiative; Food Safety Processing Utilization Initiative; and National Food Safety and Quality Programs.

This program funded the mobile abattoir and provides further funding for the Food Safety Transportation Initiative. This initiative helps cover the cost of transporting animals to and from inspected slaughter facilities.

Science and innovation

The science and innovation programs provide an approach to science and technology that brings together researchers, facilities and farmers to focus on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for Canadian agriculture. Four Yukon programs are offered, with over \$330,000 expended: Circumpolar Education and Exchange Initiative; Circumpolar Research and Demonstration; Yukon Research and Demonstration; Circumpolar Ambassador. There are also two national programs: National Science and Innovation Program; and Strategic Development for Science and Innovation. These programs provide funding support for research in the Yukon and for travelling to connect with research in other parts of the world.

WILDLIFE DAMAGE PREVENTION PROGRAM

A Wildlife Damage Prevention Program was implemented late in 2007 to deal with concerns raised about the significant loss of improved pasture, damage caused by elk entering pastures and foraging on seeded crops, and the mixing with livestock leading to potential disease transmission. Until the winter of 2006-07, individual elk and small groups of deer occasionally grazed in farmers' fields, usually during the fall and winter months. In December 2006, however, a group of approximately 100 elk, primarily cows and calves, returned to farmers' fields, remaining until April 2007.

Wildlife damage to forage crops, seeded pastures and fences varies significantly from year to year, depending on the severity of winter weather conditions. The Yukon Wildlife Damage Prevention Program is one of the tools available to farmers to assist them in the transition to long-term solutions to the conflict.

ADVANCING CANADIAN AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The goal of the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (ACAAF) program is to position Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector at the leading edge to capture new opportunities. ACAAF is about the future of the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector and finding new approaches for advancement and innovation. Ideas that lead to better products, processes and technologies need to be developed, tested and advanced for use. Information needs to reach the right people at the right time.

The objectives of the program are to:

- expand the industry's capacity to respond to current and emerging issues;
- position the sector to capture market opportunities;
- actively and continuously engage the sector to contribute to future agriculture and agri-food policy directions; and
- integrate sector-led projects tested and piloted under ACAAF into future government or industry initiatives.

ACAAF is administered through the Yukon Agricultural Association and has a budget of \$256,000 per year (Table 8).

Table 8. Approved funding under the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food program.

Amount approved (\$)	Project
31,000	Establishment and inoculation of alfalfa into existing grass-hay stands in the Yukon Territory
18,000	GoOFY research in the area of successful legume culture study (Year 1)
16,000	Development of BoldRush protein energy beverages
1,000	Establishment of a swine broodstock farrowing facility in the Yukon Territory
22,000	GoOFY research in the area of successful legume culture study (Year 2)
14,000	Oilseed production potential in the Yukon
14,000	Terre Madre Slow Food Conference
11,000	Craft fibre mill feasibility study
60,000	Yukon Multi-Year Development Plan
BioFuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative	
30,000	Yukon biofuel potential and opportunities
Collective outcome projects	
39,000	Technical and Business Feasibility of Multi-location Abattoirs in Canada
15,000	Horse Council of British Columbia Pilot Program for Online Equine Education Program
10,000	Assisted reproductive technologies in bison: Implications for preserving the genetic diversity of free ranging and captive populations
2,000	Canadian Organic Growers Practical Skills Handbook Series

CANADA-YUKON INDUSTRY TRANSITION PROGRAM AGREEMENT

A transitional programming agreement was set out between 2004 and 2006. As in the other territories, this money was used to fund a research and development-type program for the agriculture industry. Funds were administered through the Yukon Agricultural Association. The total budget for the program was \$271,000.

Table 9. Approved funding under the Canada-Yukon Industry Transition Program Agreement.

Amount approved (\$)	Project
Food safety and quality	
8,000	Abattoir facility study and action plan
12,000	Abattoir business plan
14,000	Mobile abattoir MPU scale
2,000	Organic certification
2,000	Organic inspector
Environmental farm plans	
5,000	Green manure: Preliminary research and project design
Renewal	
6,000	Yukon-grown positive image
29,000	2006 Agricultural Products Directory
14,000	Celebrating Yukon Food
2,000	Exploring processing facilities
8,000	Liaison with national/other game farm organizations
Public awareness, promotion and education	
20,000	Food from the Yukon, for the Yukon
3,000	Yukon Game Growers Association
9,000	Public awareness and promotion equipment
8,000	Klondyke Harvest Fair 2005
5,000	Research bubble insulated greenhouse
9,000	Klondyke Harvest Fair 2006
15,000	Employability skills/greenhouse project
4,000	Organic Apprenticeship Program
2,000	Agriculture Excellence Conference
3,000	Yukon Organic Producer Networking
11,000	Land proposal
12,000	Land application
Science and innovation	
9,000	5th annual Circumpolar Agricultural Conference

POLICY INITIATIVES

Agriculture policy review

The *Vision of Yukon Agriculture: 2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy* came into effect on April 6, 2006. Official adoption of the policy marked the end of a process that began in 2003.

During the summer of 2003, a first round of consultation was held with industry, Yukon First Nations, and mandated boards and councils to identify policy issues and concerns. In the summer of 2004, a discussion paper describing policy issues and options was released, and that fall, broad public consultations were held to seek feedback on these issues and options.

Concurrently, the Agriculture Branch carried out several studies on key policy issues and worked closely with the agriculture industry and other stakeholders to identify how the existing agriculture policy which came into effect in 1991 needed to be updated.

The *2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy* is a product of this consultation. It is designed to meet the current needs and interests of the Yukon agriculture industry and the public. It is also designed to reflect the broader policy commitments already made through the Agricultural Policy Framework to encourage development of an industry which is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and produces high quality and safe food products.

The goal of the policy is to encourage the growth of a Yukon agricultural industry that:

- produces high quality products for local consumption;
- is economically viable;
- operates in an environmentally sustainable manner; and
- contributes to community well being.

The vision for Yukon agriculture is an industry that significantly increases its production of healthy, locally grown food for local consumption. To support this, government will give priority to improving and increasing productivity on agricultural lands, expanding the agricultural land base in a carefully planned manner, and developing program and infrastructure support that facilitates the growth of an economically viable and environmentally sustainable industry.

This policy is intended to reflect the social, economic and environmental values of Yukon people. It is also designed to address the current needs of the local agriculture industry. As well, it meets the commitments Yukon has made at the national level to improving the quality, environmental sustainability and economic viability of the industry.

SUMMARY OF KEY POLICY STATEMENTS

Subdivision of agricultural parcels

The *Subdivision Act*, the Subdivision Regulations and the Agricultural Development Area Regulations will be amended in order to implement the following provisions to allow for the tightly controlled subdivision of agricultural parcels to address the following two situations:

- Permitting one-time subdivision to allow a farmer who is living on their farm, but no longer interested in farming, to subdivide their parcel so he and/or she can stay living there, and pass the rest of the parcel on to someone else who will farm it.
- Permitting subdivision to allow for the creation of a public surveyed road right-of-way or public utility lot through an existing parcel.

Agricultural land dispositions

Agricultural land will be released through Fee Simple Tenure under a seven-year agreement for sale. For every one dollar of approved development work completed, one dollar of the appraised market value may be forgiven (one-for-one).

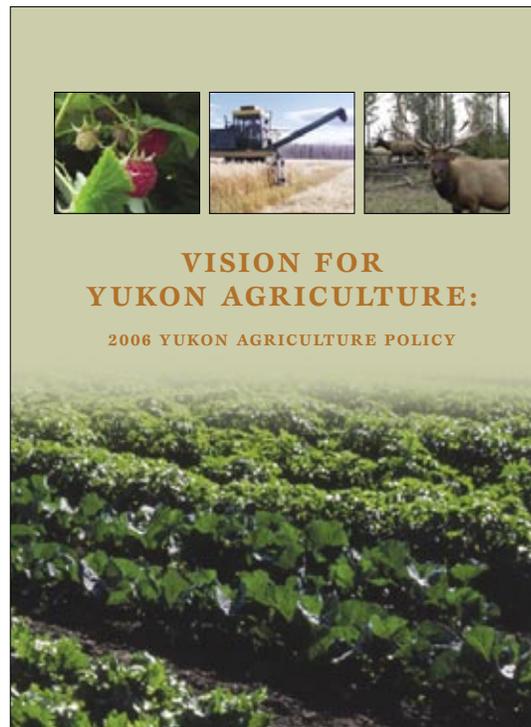
The environment

Government policies and programs for agriculture will be designed to facilitate an industry that is compatible with the environment and environmentally sustainable on a long-term basis.

Infrastructure development

Government will support the development of required infrastructure to facilitate the growth of the agriculture industry.

Implementation of the 2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy is ongoing. Regulations were amended under the *Yukon Territorial Lands Act* and the *Subdivision Act* to enable limited subdivision of agriculture land. The remaining policy implementation piece relates to regulating activities on agriculture lands. In 2008, there will be consultation on the proposed regulation changes. A copy of the 2006 agriculture policy is available through the Agriculture Branch.



INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

There are a number of well-organized associations affiliated with Yukon Agriculture: Yukon Agricultural Association, Growers of Organic Food Yukon, Yukon Game Growers Association, Yukon 4-H, the Fireweed Community Market Society, and the Yukon Food Processors Association.

To help in decision making, the Yukon Agriculture Branch works closely with the Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee, a group of appointed industry members. Members from the Yukon Agricultural Association, the Growers of Organic Food Yukon, and the Game Growers Association are all a part of the committee and help in forming the direction of the Agriculture Branch activities.

YUKON AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

“If you ate today, thank a farmer.”

The Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA) was incorporated as a non-profit society on May 24, 1974 for the purpose of fostering and promoting Yukon’s agricultural industry. The association works closely with the government and other interested groups to develop and advance policies and pursue goals supportive of agriculture and the needs and interests of its members. It has members around the Yukon, and an office in Whitehorse. YAA efforts between 2005 and 2007 were devoted to the following initiatives.



- Enhancing public education and awareness about the association and the agricultural industry.
- Organizing the Klondyke Harvest Fair, a two-day showcase of Yukon agriculture, home gardening, crafts and a host of activities and events for families and the community at large.
- Administering the federal Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program (ACAAF) and the Canadian Agriculture and Food Celebration.
- Fundraising through membership sales, as well as obtaining financial support from the Yukon government (for office administration and the Klondyke Harvest Fair), and through the delivery of the federal government’s ACAA program.
- On behalf of the industry, lobbying the federal government for transition funding under the Agricultural Policy Framework and administering projects that met Agricultural Policy Framework objectives.

- Attending numerous meetings and reviews on issues and concerns surrounding the agricultural industry, including the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, Agricultural Policy Framework Advisory Committee, and agriculture and grazing lease policies evaluations.
- Participating in events, including the annual agricultural symposium, trade shows and agri-food celebrations.
- Fostering circumpolar awareness among members. Members attended the 6th Circumpolar Agriculture Conference held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 2007.

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GROWERS OF ORGANIC FOOD YUKON

Growers of Organic Food Yukon (GoOFY) is a local chapter of Canadian Organic Growers and was first formed in January of 2003 to provide an opportunity for farmers and gardeners interested in growing organically to share information and resources. Three Yukon farms are certified organic and one is in transition to be certified. As of December 2007, GoOFY had 21 registered members, which includes family memberships as well as individuals.

A number of activities were carried out between 2005 and 2007. The projects (Table 10) were either undertaken by the Growers of Organic Food Yukon or its members, individually or in conjunction with other organizations.

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YUKON GAME GROWERS ASSOCIATION

The Yukon Game Growers Association supports and promotes the game farming industry. There are four active elk farms and one bison ranch in the Yukon. The group is a member of the Canadian Cervid Council and also remains in contact with the Alberta Elk Commission.

In the past, elk and bison farmers in the Yukon have relied on marketing their animals as breed stock. The Yukon is well-known for its quality genetics. However, due to international and national events outside of the Yukon's control, markets for live game farmed animals has diminished. The international market for velvet antler has recovered over the past two years, increasing elk farming viability. Local game farmers have turned to local meat sales to keep their operations afloat and to keep up with the constant feed costs.

Table 10. Activities undertaken by the Growers of Organic Food Yukon.

Projects	Workshops and conferences attended by GoOFY members
Formation of the Fireweed Community Society was initiated by the members of GoOFY.	Terra Madre Slow Food Conference
Representation on Canadian Organic Regulations Committee and Organic Federation of Canada	Soil Food Web workshop, Corvallis, Oregon
Slow food dinner, Lorne Mountain Community Centre	COABC (Certified Organic Association of BC) annual general meeting
GoOFY fundraising coffee bar at Fireweed Market	Food Secure Canada Conference, Vancouver
Yukon-eat local t-shirts	Canadian Organic Growers Growing Up Organic Conference, Toronto
Legume culture study (ongoing)	Organic Federation of Canada annual general meeting
Ball mill (rock powder) project	Deconstructing dinner planning session, Nelson, BC
Poultry processing group (ongoing) (separate group on the books)	Pacific Agricultural Certification Society, consultations
Genetically engineered-free Yukon campaign, petition (separate group but actively supporting)	Canadian Biotechnology Action Network annual general meeting
Earth Day event booth and panel discussion	Circumpolar Agriculture Conference and Planning Meeting
Health participation and group discussion	Fact-finding trip to Manitoba to understand food processing regulations and visit a food testing laboratory
Work parties to help member farmers	Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network and Mini Mills visit
Celebration of harvest with Downtown Urban Gardeners/Yukon Educational Theatre	Canadian Organic Growers Conference, Guelph
Yukon Wildlife Preserve open house	Ongoing participation in organizations and boards
Wildwood Festival Lorne Mountain Community Centre	Agricultural Policy Framework Canada-Yukon Industry Group
Klondike Harvest Fair (2006)	Agricultural Policy Framework Canada-Yukon Committee
Networking for organic awareness, many written articles, support for visitors inquiring about organic sustainable farming issues in the Yukon (researchers, published authors and writers)	Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Council
Ongoing outreach, information and support for new farmers and consumers	Yukon Food Processors Association
Presentations organized all or partly by GoOFY	Fireweed Community Market Society
Soil-food-web presentation at Lorne Mountain Community Centre	Yukon Agricultural Association Board of Directors
Talk on Mesofauna by Pat Richardson, visiting scientist	Yukon Agricultural Association members
100 Mile Diet author, James Mackinnon, at Alpine Bakery	Organic Federation of Canada
Nutrition facts panel workshop and the purchase of the Genesis database to create nutritional facts labels for processed goods	Canadian Biotechnology Action Network
Your Own Farmers Market lecture series, recording, Vancouver, BC	GE-free Yukon
	Society for a GE-free BC
	Slow Food
	Food Secure Canada
	National Farmers Union
	Great Green Growers Co-op

There is a strong local market for lean game-farmed meat (elk and bison). Bison and elk meat is largely sold at farmers' markets and through farm gate sales. Many customers appreciate quality game meat that is low in fat, low in cholesterol and high in protein. There is still a local demand for the velvet antler product, which is sold at health food stores and pet stores in the Yukon.

Many of the elk producers have reduced their herd size through meat sales and have decided not to breed their cows until markets return for live, game-farmed animals.

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YUKON 4-H

4-H is an international program for youth ages six to 20 years of age. It is dedicated to developing well-rounded, responsible, independent citizens. 4-H stands for head, heart, hands and health, which is the members' pledge to their club, community and country.

The Yukon 4-H program began in 1981 in Whitehorse, with the establishment of the horticultural and beef club. Today, 4-H Yukon oversees the activities of three main clubs, one each in Dawson City, Whitehorse and Watson Lake. The Whitehorse and Watson Lake clubs are structured as multi-clubs, which allow any number of projects to be pursued by members while still providing a central base where leadership skills are practiced. Recent projects have included dog, horse, llama, rabbits, swine, skipping, outdoor living and model airplane. The third club, in Dawson, is devoted to horses.

In recent years, a Cloverbud project, tailored to six- to eight-year olds, has been set in place. This introduces the participant to 32 different projects. Two of the clubs in the territory use the Cloverbud project.

4-H Yukon holds regular teleconference meetings, sponsored by Agriculture Branch, to enable the leaders and members to do business, deal with issues, plan and coordinate events such as the Territorial Public Speaking Competition held each year.

Phone: 867-633-8416

FIREWEED COMMUNITY MARKET

“It’s more than about good food”

The Fireweed Community Market was established in 2005 and hosts a weekly market in Shipyards Park from mid-May to mid-September as well as seasonal or special events markets at other locations during the year.

The express purpose of the group is to create “an enduring and cooperating community of people who wish to promote local production and consumption.”

The Fireweed Community Market has been instrumental in connecting producers and consumers and has continued to see an increase in the number of vendors along with increased consumer traffic.

The Fireweed Community Market produced *Celebrate Yukon Food*, a local, seasonal foods cook book containing farm profiles as well as articles about food.

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*Selling locally made goat cheese and other products at the Fireweed Market.
(Photo by Peter Long)*

YUKON FOOD PROCESSORS ASSOCIATION

The Yukon Processors Association, a non-profit organization, was formed October 15, 2006. Its membership represents all segments of the food and beverage industry including growers, processors, retailers and service suppliers.

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Celebrate Yukon Food: www.yukonfood.com

Agriculture Branch, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources: www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture

Yukon Agricultural Association: www.yukonaa.ca



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