



# Building Essential Public Support for the Future of Delta’s Agriculture

**T**HE COMMUNITY OF DELTA IS HOME to some of the most productive agricultural land in BC. Agriculture plays a significant role in the area with many multi-generation farms, but as the rapidly growing community loses touch with its agricultural roots, the future of farming in the region becomes less certain.

When Delta farmers sat down to discuss the impacts of climate change and to develop an action plan for the sector to adapt, the need to rebuild agriculture’s profile in the community was a clear priority. Regardless of what threats emerge, maintaining an agricultural land base and a resilient agriculture sector in the region will require the support and commitment of the broader population.

“Agriculture is 50% of our land base in Delta, and it borders a lot of urban development,” explains Leisa Yee, manager of the Delta Farmers’ Institute (DFI). “We really need the non-farming community to understand farm practices and connect with us as part of the community.”

PROJECT	<i>Climate Change &amp; Agriculture Education &amp; Outreach</i>
LOCATION	<i>Delta</i>
COMPLETION	<i>December 2015</i>
PROJECT LEAD	<i>Delta Farmers’ Institute</i>
FUNDING PARTNERS	<i>Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Corporation of Delta, Real Estate Foundation</i>

Since the completion of Delta’s adaptation plan for agriculture, DFI, in partnership with the Corporation of Delta, has undertaken a series of outreach activities to share information with the broader community. The project provides engaging materials that tell the stories of local farming families, while explaining what climate change means for agriculture in the area.

A series of three videos that bring Delta families together with their farming neighbours to see local farm activities firsthand have received broad distribution, and a very

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positive response. A poster that provides a calendar for local produce availability, and also profiles local farm families and the challenges they face as a result of climate change, is now in its second printing.

“I believe this project is helping people appreciate the efforts being made as we adjust to climate change and how it affects putting quality produce in the consumers’ hands,” says Jerry Keulen, one of the farmers profiled in the project. “It also encourages us as farmers to do the best job possible because we know the consumer really cares how their food is grown and expects Delta’s farmers to be doing a responsible job as stewards of the soil and environment.”

Looking to the younger generations, DFI is partnering with BC Agriculture in the Classroom to increase the profile of agriculture in schools. “We chose the *Spuds in Tubs* program because it’s Delta-focused (we grow 50% of BC’s potatoes) and to connect climate change concepts to a program that was already well-received and used by teachers,” says Yee.

“We want students to be more familiar with Delta farms and what’s going on in their community, and to understand what’s happening to farmers and how they are adapting to climate change,” says Yee, regarding the Grade 7 and 11 curriculum packages that have now been developed. The first teacher orientation workshop drew 29 educators to learn about the school program that starts Spring 2016.

The success of the Delta Climate Change & Agriculture Outreach and Education project has been driven by strong partnerships. In addition to support from the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative, the project has received funding and staff support from the Corporation of Delta, and funding from the Real Estate Foundation. The Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust and BC Ministry of Agriculture have also been active on the project committee.

Projects like this are part of the work being delivered by the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative (CAI). CAI develops tools and resources to assist BC farmers and ranchers with adapting to impacts of climate change. CAI’s Regional Adaptation Enhancement Program provides up to \$300,000 to implement priority projects identified in each regional adaptation strategy.

[www.BCAgClimateAction.ca](http://www.BCAgClimateAction.ca)

*The BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative was launched in 2008 by the BC Agriculture Council to enable a proactive and pan-agriculture approach to climate change issues. The Climate Action Initiative is currently supported by the BC Agricultural Research & Development Corporation and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC with funding provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.*

