

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Shortly after the First World War, a group of scientists working in Canadian agriculture came together to form the Canadian Society of Technical Agriculturalists (C.S.T.A.). In 1945, the organization's name was changed to the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC). As the British North America Act gave full power of formation, recognition and control of all professional groups to provincial legislatures AIC could not gain legal professional status for all its members on a national basis. Consequently in April 1947, the government of British Columbia enacted the Agrologists Act, creating the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists ("BCIA").

As it is today, the original role of BCIA was to protect the public interest through the governing of the professional conduct of its members. Agrology in the 1947 Act was very narrowly defined, applying almost exclusively to those working in the agri-food industry. In 2003, a new Agrologists Act [SBC 2003 Ch.13] (the "Act") was brought into force. Agrology, once almost solely concerned with agriculture, is now more broadly defined in the Act as:

"... using agricultural and natural sciences and agricultural and resource economics, including collecting or analyzing data or carrying out research or assessments, to design, evaluate, advise on, direct or otherwise provide professional support to

- (a) the cultivation, production, improvement, processing or marketing of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals, or
- (b) the classification, management, use, conservation, protection, restoration, reclamation or enhancement of aquatic or terrestrial ecosystems that are affected by, sustain, or have the potential to sustain the cultivation or production of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals.

**The new Act is very clear that the purpose of BCIA is to protect the public interest and not to represent its members except in conjunction with the protection of that interest.**

The new Act was part of a general policy of government to place greater reliance on the self-regulating professions for policing professional behaviour and maintaining professional standards. This policy is generally known as the professional reliance model which is the focus of a significant review by the Government of British Columbia in 2017-2018. The long term affects of that review may have a significant influence on the profession of agrology during the term of this Strategic Plan.

As part of the strategic review process BCIA enacted a new set of Bylaws as of January 1st, 2018. These Bylaws confirmed the establishment of the Branches and Committees of BCIA which derive their respective authority only from Council and as such do not have independent legal existence or authority.

Previous Strategic Plans of BCIA concentrated on the development of operational tools for the organization rather than on strategic future success. To address this in January 2017 the BCIA Council ("Council") commenced an extensive consultation process of BCIA Members to gather information as to the future of BCIA and the profession of agrology within British Columbia over the next 5 years. A series of facilitated consultation sessions were held throughout the province during 2017 with at least one session being held in each of BCIA's eight Branches. The ideas and comments from those sessions were summarized in a master "What was Said" document in early 2018. On March 9-10, 2018 Council together with incoming Councillors and President Elects met for two days to develop a development blueprint for BCIA based on the member consultations. This Strategic Plan is the culmination of those efforts and is predicated on the policy governance model of interaction between stakeholders, Council, staff and members.

## AUTHORITY

BCIA is authorized under the Act to govern the professional conduct of its members. Persons who hold themselves out to be professional Agrologists must be duly registered with BCIA under the Act. The Act expressly stipulates the purpose and authority of BCIA as follows:

3 (1) The British Columbia Institute of Agrologists is continued as a corporation composed of

- (a) the members of the institute, and
- (b) the members of the council.

(2) The purpose of the institute is

- (a) to uphold and protect the public interest by
  - (i) preserving and protecting the scientific methods and principles that are the foundation of the agricultural and natural sciences,

- (ii) upholding the principles of stewardship that are the foundation of agrology, and
- (iii) ensuring the integrity, objectivity and expertise of its members, and
- (b) subject to paragraph (a),
  - (i) to govern its members in accordance with this Act and the bylaws, and
  - (ii) to cooperate with other professional or occupational bodies charged with governing the conduct or competence of their members on a matter the institute considers relevant to agrology. (Emphasis added)

All activities, actions, rules, bylaws and decisions of BCIA are governed by and must be in compliance with the authority granted in the above noted section.

## VALUES, VISION, MISSION

### Value Statements

The legitimacy, vitality and reputation of any organization are determined by the organizations values and adherence to those aspirations. BCIA believes in the following values;

- ◇ **Inclusivity** – the success of BCIA and its Members rely upon responsible consideration of the opinions, concepts, beliefs and principles of all people of British Columbia;
- ◇ **Scientific Rigour** –the application of exacting scientific standards is the metric against which the work of BCIA Members should be measured;
- ◇ **Integrity** - BCIA and its Members shall steadfastly adhere to the highest professional standards of honesty, reliability and honour;
- ◇ **Collaboration** - all activities of BCIA shall encourage cooperation between its Members, the public, and other organizations engaged in the responsible use of British Columbia’s natural resources;
- ◇ **Universal Consideration** – decisions and activities of BCIA shall encompass a multiple lines of evidence approach and while emphasizing the body of science will consider social, economic and environmental frameworks.

### Vision

Through effective professional self-regulation, BCIA and its Members shall be consistently regarded by the people of British Columbia as upholding and protecting the public interest.

### Mission

The mission of BCIA is to ensure the professional integrity and competency of its members to protect the public interest in the sustainable use of resources.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Council exists to implement the mission of BCIA in accordance with the vision, goals and purposes of the organization. The Strategic Plan guides the actions of Council to meet its role and shall be realised through the implementation of annual work plans proposed by the staff of BCIA. As work plans will vary on an annual basis only general activities rather than specific actions should be listed in the Strategic Plan. The strategic directions will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure contemporary relevance with a compliance report being provided to every Annual General Meeting.

BCIA will promote the following five Strategic Directions to meet its mission and ensure integrity, objectivity and expertise of members over the next 5 years.

### 1. Nourish public trust through outreach and continuous improvement

Ensure the credibility of agrology through:

- o Enforcement of a rigorous structure to ensure member competency with a transparent audit process;
- o In collaboration with government, industry, other professional organizations, and academia develop and maintain a relevant framework to update professional practice standards including but not limited to the investigation of obtaining right to practice provisions for BCIA Members.

Increase awareness and visibility of BCIA:

- o Implement innovative community engagement activities and promotions;
- o Increase provincial and national visibility of agrology in conjunction with organizations such Agrologists/ Agronomes of Canada.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 2. Strengthen competency

Increase clarity in competency required for the current areas of practice including the development of practice standards, and the enforcement of audits and examinations;

Increase collaboration with academic institutions and other professional organizations to:

- o ensure the offering of appropriate courses in alignment with the definition of agrology and contemporary qualification requirements;
- o provide relevant targeted professional development activities;

Strengthen the BCIA Mentorship program by:

- o Increased training for and of mentors;
- o Developing quality evaluation / reviews of the program;
- o Streamline the Mentor assignment and selection process;
- o Use of innovative tools such as webinars, and virtual branches.

### 3. Ensure Professional integrity

Uphold the principles of stewardship by:

- o Developing relevant, contemporary professional development events and activities;
- o Increasing Branch collaboration and exchange of knowledge;
- o Embracing the use of innovative educational technologies such as webinars and distant learning;
- o Collaborating with other professional organizations to clarify professional overlap between areas of practice;
- o Developing guidance documents specific to areas of practice, application of the Code of Ethics and the exchange of technical opinions.

### 4. Uphold responsible resource management

Facilitate access for Members to contemporary and developing advances in the scientific principles that are the foundation of agrology including but not limited to, the precautionary principle, shared responsible stewardship and climate change strategies;

Consider the opinions, values and beliefs of all stakeholders and disciplines involved in the use of British Columbia's natural resources;

Work in partnership with other organizations including but not limited to natural resource professionals on matters of common interest.

### 5. Pursue organizational excellence through adaptive, progressive and inclusive governance

Develop and utilize proactive governance that can adapt to the changing legal, social and environmental climates including:

- o Improved Members and public understanding of BCIA structures and policies;
- o Regular reassessment of roles, relevance and professional requirements;
- o Engagement of volunteers to build organizational capacity through effective membership engagement;
- o Increased Branch engagement through increased clarity of roles and responsibilities relative to the organization;
- o Active communication and collaboration with other professions;
- o Governance training for elected Council and Branch executives.
- o Maintenance of contemporary bylaws;
- o Enhance the use and effectiveness of the policy governance model to guide the development of the organization;
- o Regular review of Committee structures and Terms of Reference to ensure compliance with the ever changing needs of the institute.

Maintain a progressive BCIA organization including:

- o Membership and relationships reflective and inclusive of British Columbia's diversity;
- o Intellectual integrity with reliance on facts, data and reviewable evidence;
- o Understand and strengthen performance of the Professional Reliance Model;
- o Inclusive nominations to pursue leadership reflective of the diversity of BCIA members;
- o Recognition of diverse forms of educational, experiential and traditional knowledge;
- o Celebration of achievement, knowledge, professional and community contributions.