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Agri-Food Canada

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Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries



Investment
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of British Columbia

British Columbia Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative

Peace Region Agroforestry Workshop Agroforestry Opportunities - Adding to Your Enterprise March 4, 2005 - Taylor, BC

Final Report

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1 Introduction

In November of 2003 a series of five regional workshops were held around the province as the first project of the Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative. Workshops were held in Oyster River (Vancouver Island), Vernon, Cranbrook, Abbotsford and Prince George covering most areas of the province with a notable exception of the Peace Region. The intent at the time was to offer a future workshop in the Peace Region, the interest for which was emphasized by several attendees at the Prince George workshop.

With interest reiterated by several stakeholders in 2004, an agroforestry workshop was delivered in the Peace Region following a format similar to those offered in November of 2003. Thereby providing both general and regionally specific information to participants as well as collecting information on regional needs that the Agroforestry Management Committee (AMC) could use in furthering industry development. Specific objectives were to:

1. provide education and build awareness about agroforestry systems and their economic, environmental and social benefits;
2. increase knowledge of agroforestry practices, potential products and markets;
3. increase awareness of the Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative and the opportunity to apply for cost-shared program funding; and
4. identify regional opportunities, gaps and potential partners.

Third party consultants (Econ Consulting) were contracted to coordinate and deliver the first 5 workshops in 2003. However, because the AMC had contracted a Project Development and Implementation Facilitator (George Powell) in October 2004, he was able to take on the responsibility of organizing and implementing the Peace Region workshop as a part of his role in promoting the Agroforestry Initiative and building partnerships.

In addition to the Agroforestry Initiative Facilitator, BC Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries (BCMAFF) and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, (AAFC) staff provided support for the organization and implementation of the workshop. Planning began in November 2004 for delivery in March 2005. Specific details on the organization, location, objectives, format, and content of the workshop was coordinated by a committee consisting of George Powell, Dave Trotter (BCMAFF), Lisa Zabek (BCMAFF) and Allen Eagle (AAFC). The AMC reviewed and approved the final workshop format in January 2005.

Presentations from a variety of regional speakers and provincial specialists were invited to provide examples and speak about the general environmental, economic and production concepts in agroforestry practices and product marketing. These presentations are summarized in section 2.0 of this report. After the formal presentations, participants were organized into 3 working groups for breakout sessions designed to respond to a series of workshop questions. Group input from the breakout sessions was collected on flipchart paper and was summarized in section 3.0 of this report.

The town of Taylor was chosen as the venue as it is centrally located in the Peace Region. The final agenda for the workshop was as follows:

Peace Region Agroforestry Workshop

Agroforestry Opportunities – Adding to Your Enterprise

Taylor Community Hall, Taylor, BC
March 4, 2005

<i>9:00 – 10:00 am Late Registration - coffee and refreshments</i>
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|---------------|--|
| 10:00 – 10:10 | Welcome – Opening Remarks – <i>George Powell, Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative</i> |
| 10:10 – 11:00 | Introduction to Agroforestry, Regional Examples - <i>Dave Trotter, Lisa Zabek, BC Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries</i> |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | PFRA/Agroforestry Program overview - <i>Allen Eagle, Agriculture and Agrifood Canada</i> |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | Forest Product Opportunities - <i>Greg Lay, Northern Lights College</i> |

<i>12:00 – 12:45 pm Lunch</i>

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 12:45 – 1:15 | Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative – Projects & Funding Opportunities, <i>George Powell</i> |
| 1:15 – 1:45 | Economic Considerations: Where’s the Profit? - <i>Jim Forbes, Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries</i> |
| 1:45 – 2:15 | Direct Marketing – <i>Evelyn Pereira, Producer, Prince George</i> |
| 2:15 – 4:00 | Breakout Sessions - opportunity for participants to network and provide feedback to the Agroforestry Management Committee (AMC).
6-8 people will form a group. Each group will discuss and work on 3 sets of questions |
| 2:15 – 2:20 | Set up of group sessions (5min) |
| 2:20 – 2:40 | Session 1: what’s out there (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what regional agroforestry practices & opportunities exist ▪ where are they and which could be potential demonstration sites |
| 2:40 – 3:00 | Session 2: networking & marketing (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ who are the regional players: (organizations, producers, potential partners) ▪ what and where are the markets for agroforestry products |
| 3:00 – 3:20 | Session 3: gaps (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what regional information and extension needs exist ▪ what are the marketing challenges and needs for agroforestry products in the Peace region |
| 3:20 – 3:45 | Presentation of session results |
| 3:45 – 4:00 | Discussion, Conclusions and Workshop Wrap up |

The workshop was promoted via various print and electronic distributions:

1. agenda and registration information were posted on the Agroforestry Initiative’s website (hosted by the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations, www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/) and e-mailed to the Initiative’s electronic mailing list,
2. agenda and registration information were mailed to producers (agricultural and woodlot), and key agricultural and forestry organizations and contact persons in the Peace Region;
3. workshop announcements were forwarded to the BC Institute of Agrologists and the BC Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries regional staff for redistribution to their respective contact lists; and,
4. workshop announcements were aired on the CBC ‘Day Break North’ program as well as six announcements on CJDC radio 890 AM.

The majority of registrations were received in advance by email or fax during the pre-registration period in February 2005. There were also several registrations at the door on the day of the workshop. Only one pre-registrant did not show up the workshop.

A fee of \$35 was charged to each registrant to help cover costs. Coffee, refreshments and lunch were provided to the participants. Payment for the workshop was accepted at the door. BCMAFF and AAFC shelterbelt program staff provided agroforestry-related publications free of charge and photocopied handouts of the presentations were mailed after the workshop to 15 participants who had expressed interest in hard copies of the information. Copies of the ‘Guide to Agroforestry in BC’ in both hardcopy and CD format were available for sale to participants at \$25 and \$5 respectively, however no copies were sold.

The primary target audience was the producer/industry community. However, experience with the other workshops indicated potential attendance by representatives from resource professionals and government agencies thereby providing a means of extending information to the larger community. The following table provides a break down of the attendance by stakeholder and associated groups. With the exception of one member of the press who attended the morning presentations, all registrants and speakers fully attended the workshop (presentations and afternoon breakout sessions). All participants (registrants, media and speakers) elected to be added to the Agroforestry Initiative’s mailing list.

Participation breakdown	
Speakers / Facilitator	7
Landowner / producer / woodlot licensee	6
First Nations / Association / Other organization	3
Consultants	3
Media	1
Government (MAFF, LWBC)	5
Total	25

2. Workshop Summary

2.1 Presentations

The workshop began with coffee and refreshments to allow for late registration, and to permit workshop participants to network, view static displays from the BCMAFF, AAFC and the Boreal Centre for Conservation and Enterprise.

George Powell, Project Development and Implementation Facilitator for the Agroforestry Initiative facilitated the workshop delivery and provided some opening comments to begin the presentation portion of the workshop.

Agroforestry in BC: Crop Opportunities, Markets and Needs

Dave Trotter, Agroforestry Specialist with the BCMAFF started the workshop presentations with an overview of agroforestry systems as well as regional and provincial examples. Lisa Zabeck supplemented Dave's overview with a talk on the economic, social and environmental benefits that can accrue from adopting agroforestry practices. She outlined agroforestry industry development and needs based on survey information collected for the development of the BC Agroforestry Strategic Plan and information from a series of regional workshops conducted in 2003. Lisa highlighted existing extension material, the strengths and limitations of expanding agroforestry in BC, market opportunities and the gaps that must be addressed for development of agroforestry in the province.

Agroforestry is a management approach that integrates familiar and new agriculture and forestry practices into land management systems that contribute to diversification and sustainability of production. Operationally it is the deliberate retention or introduction of trees and/or shrubs into agricultural production systems; or, the deliberate introduction or enhancement of other crops (or livestock) in forest production systems. Thus agroforestry represents the co-management of trees, crops and/or livestock and their interactions in an intentional and integrated manner.

Agroforestry is a management approach that yields some balance of economic, environmental and social benefits. Potential benefits depending on system specifics include:

Economic

- New crops which can increase and diversify production and cash flow, decreasing dependence on single commodities.
- Introduction of crops which provide short-term income while waiting for long-term crops to mature.
- Diversification of labour, potentially increasing the length of time labour is needed and increasing chances of retaining trained labour year after year.

Environmental

- Protection from or remediation of environmental concerns such as: sediment interception; interception of nutrient rich ground and surface waters; reduced impacts of flooding; reduced wind erosion; aid in snow capture; etc.
- Livestock protection by tree and shrub buffers.
- Filter effect for noise, dust, odour and light.
- Enhancement of wildlife habitat, biodiversity and aesthetics.

Social

- Social aspects of improving environmental stewardship and biodiversity.
- Community and sector aspects of enhanced stability through diversification.
- Increase in carbon sequestration through changes in management practices and additions of trees and shrubs to management systems.
- Use of agroforestry systems as planning tools which aid communities in connecting to resource systems and use of buffers to reduce urban-rural conflict.

A large diversity of crops can be produced in agroforestry systems from food crops to florals to medicinals. Types of crops can be divided into four main categories:

- The trees themselves – fiber, timber, Christmas trees, etc;
- Crops from the trees – the non-fiber component such as fruit, nuts, boughs, cones and other craft products, sap products (e.g. maple and birch syrups), medicinals and nutraceuticals
- Crops from under the trees – foods (e.g. fiddleheads, mushrooms etc;), floral greens, medicinals and nutraceuticals, livestock, etc;
- Crops from between the trees – most agricultural crops (field crops, vegetables etc;), forages, fruits and nuts, florals, livestock, berries, etc;

Industries are characteristically defined by the products they produce, or the experiences they provide. In contrast, Agroforestry is an industry defined by the production systems used. Thus the industry is composed of subsets of BC's agri-food industries. Agroforestry does not convert agricultural land to forests or forested lands to agriculture. Rather, it is an approach to land management that spans the breadth of the industries of each, integrating with current land management practices to produce both familiar and novel crops. There are five basic Agroforestry systems in use in BC including:

- Alley cropping or intercropping (also known as 'sun systems');
- Silvopasture;
- Forest farming;
- Integrated riparian management; and,
- Shelter- and timberbelts/windbreaks/buffers.

Examples of the systems were provided in the presentation plus the important role value-added processing can play in final product price point. Overall, agroforestry practices need to be designed to fit specific niches within the farm to meet specific objectives. These objectives will vary with the operation.

In BC, interest in agroforestry systems as viable production practices, and awareness as an emerging industry has risen from a series of events.

- Escalating interest in alternate crops and cropping strategies by producers and consumers. A large number of reports have been published on non-timber forest products (NTFPs), many of which can be grown and harvested from managed Agroforestry systems. Apart from the conclusions specific to the subject areas of each of the reports, they call attention to two prevailing trends: 1) a growing interest in products whose market niches are quality and uniqueness with a potential for higher returns than commodity markets; and, 2) increasing interest in management systems to produce those products in a local controlled, environmentally and economically sustainable manner.
- A high degree of interest by all sectors in support of production systems promoting good stewardship.
- Workshops conducted around the province (BCMAFF and others) which provided an overview of systems and potential opportunities
- Continuing exposure via theoretical and hands-on courses (in-class, continuing education, web-based and workshops) offered by the Universities and Colleges within the province.

In 2002 a survey of producers was implemented as the first step in formalized industry development. Regional workshops were conducted in Abbotsford, Oyster River, Vernon, Cranbrook and Prince George in 2003. The survey and workshop sessions were designed to gain feedback from producers and potential producers. Overall, producers were interested in ways to supplement their current practices and add a bit of diversification. Awareness of and interest in the 'potentials' were high, however specific needs for adoption was highly important. In general industry messages from both the survey and the workshops were consistent.

<i>Survey</i>	
Strengths/Opportunities	Gaps/Limitations
Diversification – crops, labour, cash-flow. Integrate the new with the familiar. Sustainability and environment important to producers. Interest in trying alternate crops. Link producers, buyers, consumers. Increase public awareness of enhanced stewardship. ‘Brand’ products - green labeling – knowledge based marketing.	Knowledge of production specifics, markets and marketing. Markets not established. Lack of demonstration sites and training. Often more labour intensive than conventional. Regulatory uncertainty. Lack of recognition of Agroforestry systems. Product competition from wild harvested materials.
<i>Workshops</i>	
Opportunities	Gaps/Needs
Florals, craft products. Medicinals & nutraceuticals. Specialty foods. Christmas trees. Livestock in silvopasture. Market Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied by region • Events, farmers markets, farm gate, retail (florists, nurseries), local tourism • Health products/ medicinal industry • Internet (individual/community based) • Brokers and wholesalers • Auction • Agri-tourism 	Regionally specific information. Production costs and returns. Tech transfer resources. Demonstrations. Communication/links producers, buyers, consumers. Markets and marketing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product specifics • Buyer and producer lists • Direct market workshops • Current market trends • Distribution routes • Transportation

Following Dave Trotter and Lisa Zabek’s introductory presentations, a discussion ensued and several questions were asked about local and potential agroforestry products and opportunities. These included questions about mushroom production, floral greens and the potential for a carbon credit program utilizing agroforestry production systems.

PFRA/Agroforestry Program Overview

Allen Eagle, provided an overview of Agriculture and Agrifood Canada’s Agroforestry Division, including a discussion of their current projects and programs. After a brief recap of the major temperate agroforestry practices, Allen outlined AAFC’s agroforestry research including studies of tree health, performance, and evaluation of agroforestry practices. He discussed AAFC’s role in agroforestry development in Canada through the development of information and technology transfer materials and outlined the tree production and distribution program from the PFRA Shelterbelt Centre. Allen provided some excellent examples of the benefits of shelterbelt technology and gave detailed, regionally pertinent information on site preparation, planting and maintenance of shelterbelts. Allan concluded his presentation with a discussion of the shelterbelt program eligibility criteria and details of applying for assistance through the shelterbelt enhancement program and environmental farm planning incentives.

Allen’s presentation generated questions and discussion on program deadlines and geographic restrictions of the shelterbelt enhancement program, as well as a specific interest in information on growing Manitoba maple in the Peace Region for sap/syrup production.

Forest Product Opportunities

In the final presentation before the lunch break, Greg Lay, Forest Resources Instructor at Northern Lights College, presented an overview of the forest products opportunities in the Peace Region with a focus on current and future forest products opportunities, which can occur through agroforestry practices. Greg related that most wood production may be marketed as either sawlogs or pulp logs. He emphasized that commercial timber production is a long-term proposition and should occur on lands of marginal agricultural value. The area chosen for timber production should complement your agricultural enterprise. For example, in the case of cattle ranching, the tree crop may be managed so that forage opportunities are enhanced (in silvopastoral systems). In the Peace Region there are naturally occurring silvopasture areas. These areas are characterized by mature aspen stands with well-spaced large trees and natural ground cover which has some value as forage. Where these conditions occur on private lands there is a good opportunity to manage for both forage and commercial timber.

Greg highlighted diversification of farm activities as a primary motivation for timber production and emphasized the need for management. Trees are a relatively low maintenance crop however, the value of both trees and forage can be increased through management practices.

The establishment of small or micro-sawmill enterprises cutting commercial timber for niche markets like oil patch timbers or rough-cut farm construction lumber was identified as a market opportunity in the Peace leading to increased demand for wood production. Markets for these products are currently not well developed but may emerge as the rural economy of the Peace Region expands. Current forestry operations are not oriented to supplying logs to these types of sawmills. As a result sawmills of this type with access to profitable markets could probably pay more for farm produced logs than large forest products companies.

For saw or pulp logs production on private lands, Greg listed the following factors to consider as essential to add forest production to an agricultural enterprise in the Peace Region:

- Is land of sufficient size (at least 320 acres) to manage for forest products using agroforestry practices,
- Do you have a long term view of your agricultural enterprise,
- Can you carry the cost of the land until revenue from log sales occurs, and
- Are you prepared to commit your labour and modest expenses in basic forestry activities such as fire protection, forest health and tree crop improvements?

In addition, having the potential to profitably sell logs at some future date may provide capital for other farm investments.

Greg raised the idea of future potential “harvest” of carbon credits and that an agricultural enterprise with proven ability to generate carbon credits may be able to gain revenue from a future carbon credits market and further increase the value of their agricultural enterprise.

Greg also believes a significant forest products opportunity exists in the Peace for establishing and growing hybrid poplar. This commercial tree species can be marketed to both pulp mills and oriented strandboard plants. The practice is well developed in Alberta where both the forest industry and provincial government are assisting farmers in establishing and growing hybrid poplar. There is a significant amount of information on this topic available on the Internet.

Another consideration for agricultural enterprises in the Peace is a BC Ministry of Forests Woodlot License. The Ministry of Forests is expanding the Woodlot License Program to include new Woodlots for the Peace Region. A Woodlot License consists of a Crown Land area of approximately 2500 acres (1200 hectares) dedicated principally to forest management but with potential for livestock grazing opportunities. Development of silvopasture management is a reasonable proposition in conjunction with a

Woodlot License. Taking on the management of a Woodlot License can be intimidating, but for those with the will and ambition it can be rewarding personally and financially. Log sales from a Woodlot would complement any agricultural enterprise, however, the ranching community would probably benefit most because of potential access to additional cattle forage.

Greg concluded by explaining that Northern Lights College is committed to providing educational opportunities to northern residents and that agroforestry is emerging as an important aspect of northern agriculture. The College will endeavour to provide courses and workshops on this subject if requested by the northern agricultural community.

Questions and discussions following Greg's presentation focused on the potential for additional deciduous (birch, aspen and poplar) processing facilities in the Peace, niche opportunities for specialty forest products and processing and a specific question regarding management of birch.

Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative – Projects and Funding Opportunities

After the lunch break and networking among participants, George Powell provided a summary of the BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative, including its purpose, goals, the structure and function of the Agroforestry Management Committee, and funding opportunities through the Initiative including eligibility and application guidelines. Current and pending projects of the Initiative were discussed, including:

- Information sessions and workshops conducted to date;
- Cedars and High Value Hardwoods demonstration;
- Tapping Bigleaf Maple demonstration;
- Hawthorn trials; and,
- Agroforestry Sustainability Calculator.

A question following the presentation related to whether or not Agroforestry Initiative projects could be completed on Crown land (yes, if okayed by the government agency responsible for the given). This was followed by a broader discussion of the potential for Agroforestry tenures in BC and management of non-timber forest products on Crown land.

Economic Considerations – Where's the Profit?

Jim Forbes, a land use agrologist with the BCMAFF, provided an economic comparison of forest and agricultural production in the Peace Region in his talk: "Where's the Profit?" Jim provided a rationale for conducting economic evaluations of each component of a farm or ranch operation and explained many of the technical terms used in an economic analysis. Jim provided revenue/area gross margins associated with timber production and a number of agricultural crops commonly produced in the Peace. The economic evaluation considered forest and agricultural crops produced independently in forested or field cropping scenarios. Data was not available to provide a regionally specific formal economic evaluation of integrated agroforestry production. Jim emphasized that other considerations including diversification, cash flows and "intangible" (aesthetics, environmental concerns, wildlife habitat, etc) reasons also influence the decision to grow trees. His principle message was that a detailed economic analysis should always be done prior to undertaking any production system and preferably with different revenue and expense profiles to itemize best and worst case scenarios.

Following his presentation, Jim fielded questions on the implications of mountain pine beetle on long-term fibre supply and prices; taxation issues and issues related to property assessment. A question was also raised as to whether fast growing (short-rotation) or higher value tree species would impact his conclusions about the profitability of tree production in an agroforestry system.

Direct Marketing

Evelyn Pereira, of Red Barn Farm in Prince George presented “Marketing 101” - practical information and advice on direct farm marketing techniques to realize a higher return from agroforestry and other agricultural production. Evelyn gave a producer-oriented overview of the pros and cons of finding the right markets for products and ideas. She outlined a host of techniques she uses to boost sales including: promotional brochures, signage at farmers markets, monthly draw, samples, packaging, cooking school and recipe cards, trade shows, donations to community banquets and fundraisers. Evelyn discussed many of value added processing and products she derives from her lamb operation as examples of how to maximize the return from what you produce.

2.2. Break out Sessions

The workshop participants were organized into three breakout groups and were given 15-20 minutes to answer each set of questions. A recorder was appointed in each group and the responses collected on flip chart paper. The workshop facilitators and MAFF presenters assisted the groups with the process. At the end each group presented their findings, which are categorized and summarized on the following pages.

What’s Out There?

a) What regional agroforestry practices & opportunities exist?

Practices

- Silvopasture – regenerating stands, thinning, mulching, grazing
- Integrated Riparian Management – environmental mitigation and management
- Hybrid poplar integrated into farming systems
- Forest Farming – non-timber forest products
- Property perimeter plantings for landscaping aesthetics and add monetary value to your property
- Riparian buffers – environmental, H₂O quality
- Agritourism/Farm B&B /Garden tours/ ecotourism/wildlife viewing
- Shelterbelts
- Reclamation – gas well sites
- Woodlot program expansion

Products:

- diamond willow
- medicinal plants
- berries
- exotic woods/hardwood flooring
- Manitoba Maple for sap/syrup
- willow furniture
- forest botanicals - teas, oils
- willows, dogwoods, poplar for land reclamation
- traditional agricultural products (grains, oilseeds, livestock, etc) produced in agroforestry systems
- Berries (fresh or dried) for wine, jams, nutraceutical products, etc.
- Medicinal products/extractives

b) Where are they and which could be potential demonstration sites?

- local producers’ land
- First Nations Woodlot
- Community Pastures (Co-op)
- Grazing Lease – Crown Lands
- Protected areas – Peace Steppes

- Ducks Unlimited Land
- Community Forests – in Chetwynd and Dawson Creek
- Dennis MacClennan – Deadfall ranch

Networking and Marketing

a) Who are the regional players (organizations, producers, and potential partners)?

- Peace Value Added Food and Agriculture Association,
- Local producers/ producer organizations
- Cattlemen/Ranchers
- Enterprise Development Centre
- Forest Companies (Canfor, Louisiana Pacific)
- Peace River Regional District
- BC Ministry of Forests
- Youth groups, 4H
- Boreal Centre for Conservation Enterprise Society
- LRR – Agroforestry – Planning
- BC Agriculture Council
- Forage Council
- Ducks Unlimited
- Peace River Economic Development Agency (PREDA)
- Northern Lights College
- Peace Woodlot Association
- Agriculture and Agrifood Canada (PFRA)
- BC Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries
- Land and Water BC Inc.

b) What and where are the markets for agroforestry products?

- local markets/buyers: Farmers markets, farm gate sales
- women's centre – market display
- Local florists (few)
- Urban (Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Anchorage) markets, but transportation an issue → need to add value to cover transportation costs
- Seed for reclamation of oil and gas industry disturbance.

Gaps

a) What regional information & extension needs exist ?

- Local Knowledge needed: What is out there? What are the production options?/What to grow? /How to grow it? → R & D trials
- capacity – support for rural development needed
- markets – community development
- information on how to move from raw wood/agriculture commodities to final value-added products
- awareness: Forest Policy Analysis (Peace) / Oil & Gas awareness – potential
- Identify commercial agroforestry species and habitats (expand on 23 species compiled by the Boreal Centre for Conservation and Enterprise)
- Analysis of production options linked to regulatory issues
- Recognition of Agroforestry as an industry/ policies on crown land/assessment authority
- Workshops to build awareness
- Need for demonstrations of local opportunities/ Controlled studies
- Awareness building /educational opportunities

b) What are the marketing challenges and needs for agroforestry products in your area?

- Lack of Knowledge of marketing / Market analysis
- Potential market for agroforestry products to BC/ N. Alberta industry
- Opportunity analysis:
 - Mulching for silvopasture
 - Reclamation of oil and gas sites
- Transportation costs
- Climate – advantages/disadvantages
- Regulatory – harvesting/tenure/treaty issues/pricing
- Assessments (taxation)
- Labour/ energy vs. high income jobs
- Products not normally considered
- “Branding the Peace”
- Federal - Provincial funding support
- Economic info on agroforestry production needed

3 Conclusions

Similarities and Differences to Previous Workshops

In common with the other interior workshops, silvopastoral and forest farming opportunities were prevalent in the Peace region. Interest in shelterbelts also featured prominently, reflecting both the abundance of prairie ecosystems and recognition of the support provided by Agriculture and Agrifood Canada's Agroforestry Division (formerly the PFRA) in the region. In addition to silvopastoral combinations, many local products (diamond willow, Manitoba maple, seeds and plants for reclamation work) and farming system adaptations (alley cropping with hybrid poplar) unique to the Peace region were identified.

As with previous regional workshops, several potential demonstration sites were identified during the breakout sessions and several participants (some representing producer groups) expressed the intent to submit proposals for funding consideration.

Networking and Marketing

As with previous workshops, regional players identified included producer groups such as the Peace Cattlemens Association, the Woodlot Associations, the local First Nations, and Farmers Market Association. The Peace Value Added Food and Agriculture Association, Boreal Centre for Conservation Enterprise Society, were identified as regional resources unique to the Peace. As with the other regional workshops, governmental organizations and utility firms (BCMAFF, BCMoF, DFO, BC Hydro, and Land and Water BC Inc) were identified as potential partners.

In agreement with previous regional workshops, the presence or potential for local, regional, and international markets were identified. Local farmers markets, farm gate sales, local retail stores and tourist industry were identified as the most important existing retail markets for agroforestry products, also in concert with previous feedback from industry stakeholders. Transportation costs to major urban markets was identified as a key limitation to marketing agroforestry products from the Peace, similar to concerns raised at the Prince George and other workshops.

Gaps

Also in general agreement with previous workshop feedback, participants identified a lack of knowledge about agroforestry practices and opportunities, and lack of recognition within the regulatory system were identified as limitations to agroforestry expansion though it was recognized that the concept is still relatively new. Additional workshops in the Peace to raise awareness and provide basic agroforestry education were suggested.

Product and production information specific for the Peace region was identified as information gaps, and a need for studies and demonstrations to address that gap was identified. Basic marketing skills and readily available information on existing and potential markets were also identified as serious gaps hindering agroforestry development.

Recommendations

On the basis of the delivery and feedback from the Taylor workshop, the following recommendations and potential action items are proposed to the Agroforestry Management Committee (AMC) for consideration:

- Interest in the Agroforestry Initiative is strong in the Peace region and the AMC should continue to support development of demonstration and extension projects in the region;
- General interest in agroforestry is growing but specific knowledge is still low. Further promotion of the Agroforestry Initiative will be necessary to ensure a broader awareness of the objectives and

funding opportunities. Moreover, additional basic extension of the opportunities and environmental, social and economic benefits of adopting agroforestry practices is needed through workshops, publications and web-based material, possibly in partnership with local education agencies, such as Northern Lights College;

- As with previous workshop recommendations and survey results, there is strong interest in having better access to regional and provincial information on product markets, wholesale and retail buyers, processors and distributors. Additional support is needed for developing appropriate, accessible market information;
- The workshop format was well received and should be employed for future Initiative workshops designed to provide a general overview of agroforestry and the Initiative. Specifically, they should continue to include a mix of speakers, including those with production experience and local knowledge, and covering the range of environmental, economic and social considerations. The opportunity for participants to provide feedback directly to the Initiative through the breakout sessions was also well received and should continue through the life of the Initiative.