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Sweet basil BC Young Farmers members toured farms that supply Paynter's Fruit Market during their Okanagan tour in June. A young farmer herself, owner Jennay Oliver oversees an orchard and ground crops to supply the storefront. Oliver (third from left) told the group one of her best herb crops is basil, which grows well, can be harvested throughout the market's operating season and is loved by her customers. Read more about the tour on page 21. MYRNA STARK LEADER PHOTO

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Committee cancels meetings

by TOM WALKER

KAMLOOPS – The province's Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fish and Food is facing criticism for its handling of the first sessions aimed at investigating local meat production in BC.

The province resurrected the committee April 24, asking it to "examine, inquire into and make recommendations concerning local meat production." The committee planned two weeks of hearings across the province

but it cancelled sessions scheduled for the first week, including stops in Dawson Creek, Prince George, Terrace, Haida Gwaii, Powell River, Abbotsford and Saanich.

The committee held just five sessions, attracting 150 attendees: Courtenay on June 11, Williams Lake and Castlegar on June 12, and Cranbrook (an add-on to the original plan) and Kamloops on June 13.

"It's been a quick trip," said committee member Ian Paton. "We have been using a chartered plane. Our biggest

challenge is getting the equipment for the Hansard recordings and the teleconferencing transported back and forth."

The hearings effectively skipped over half the current meat processing locations in the province, both provincially inspected plants and those licensed by regional health authorities.

"When you look at the map that the committee itself printed, it is easy to see that they left out a huge portion of

See MEETING on next page ➔

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