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COUNTRY LIFE IN BC

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Province allows family on farms

Year's reprieve for second homes

by **PETER MITHAM**

VICTORIA—The province is giving families living in the Agricultural Land Reserve until February 22, 2020 to obtain approvals for second homes for immediate family.

"We've worked to make long-overdue changes to help farmers farm," said BC agriculture minister Lana Popham in announcing the changes. "We heard from people living in the ALR, many who said they aren't farming but purchased ALR land for residential use. We understand that some have

See **DEADLINE** on next page ↪



TEAMWORK! Five mother-daughter teams joined the summer tour of Pacific Northwest Society for Range Management in Cache Creek at the end of June. The tour attracted 80 ranchers, range agrologists, government staff and foresters to the Cariboo for a closer look of rangeland recovery following the Elephant Hill fire of 2017. See story starting on page 21. TOM WALKER PHOTO

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Rain hammers cherry crop

by **TOM WALKER**

LAKE COUNTRY—July rains were hammering cherry growers as this edition of *Country Life in BC* was going to press. Coral Beach Farms president David Geen described it as a "battle," saying he would be happy to talk when the weather clears but was currently running on two or three hours of sleep a day. The forecast showed clearing by the end of July.

According to the BC Ministry of Agriculture, as of July 17, 260 production

insurance claims had been filed by cherry growers. Both the ministry and Geen say it's too early to know the extent of losses across the sector as rain events were still occurring and varieties will continue to ripen over the next two months.

Wet cherries absorb water and swell, which splits the skin, making them unsuitable for fresh market sales.

"The damage is expected to range widely depending on the variety and location," the ministry notes. "However, in some cases, the damage is

severe."

Growers often use helicopters to dry the cherries, as well as tractor-towed wind machines.

With multiple rain events during ripening, the costs of the battle will be significant.

"This damage follows a poor fruit set in the spring that saw the crop at only 70% of average," notes Hank Markgraf, a former fieldman with BC Tree Fruits and now an industry consultant.

"What fruit is left after the rains will have been very expensive to produce."

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