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COUNTRY LIFE IN BC

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Perfect pruning

It may be the dead of winter but there's work to be done. Graham O'Rourke demonstrated the finer points of pruning grapevines to Fraser Valley growers attending a pruning workshop hosted by the BC Grapegrowers' Association at Chaberton Estate Winery in Langley in January. The story is on page 19. RONDA PAYNE PHOTO

Open ears

ALR housing consultation underway

by **PETER MITHAM**

VICTORIA – The grandfathering period for secondary residences in the Agricultural Land Reserve for immediate family has been extended until the end of the year as the province commences yet another consultation with farmers.

The province moved to grandfather secondary homes for family in the ALR last July, recognizing that people had been taken unawares by new regulations under Bill 52 that took effect February 22, 2019.

"We've listened and have given people a bit more time to get their permits in place," BC agriculture minister Lana Popham said at the time.

The grandfathering period gave landowners until

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Tough talk on animal activists

by **DAVID SCHMIDT**

ABBOTSFORD – Both Abbotsford mayor Henry Braun and police chief Mike Serr expect Crown counsel to charge the 48 people arrested for break and enter and mischief at Excelsior Hog Farm last April, but that hasn't happened yet.

"If that goes the wrong way, you'll hear from me," Braun told the Mainland Milk Producers' annual meeting in Abbotsford, January 10.

Serr and Abbotsford Police Department media relations

officer Judy Bird were at the MMP meeting to discuss animal activism in general, defend their actions at Excelsior and offer tips on how farmers should deal with, or possibly prevent, similar incidents in future.

Chilliwack Liberal MLA John Martin insisted they not be called activists, saying that only serves to legitimize them.

"They are not activists, they are thugs, bullies and criminals," he said.

Saying the job of the police is to keep the peace,

Serr defended the department's decision to negotiate, saying it is usually a shorter process that avoids creating the social media event activists desire.

"They are very tech-savvy. Everything is live-streamed. We want to come to a peaceful solution," which is ultimately what occurred at Excelsior despite a four-hour standoff.

Serr said the police knew activists were coming before the Excelsior occupation "but

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