

BERRIES	BC berries face mixed outlook this season	7
MEAT	Closures underscore need for licensing reform	11
BEEF	Outlook cautiously optimistic for fall run	21



Quality Seeds West

YOUR BC SEED SOURCE

1-888-770-7333

Quality Seeds ... where quality counts!

COUNTRY LIFE IN BC

The agricultural news source in British Columbia since 1915 AUGUST 2020 | Vol. 106 No. 8



Master of Vine

Karnail Singh Sidhu of Kalala Organic Estate Winery in West Kelowna emigrated from India in 1993 and has built an award-winning reputation with low-input viticulture and top-notch wines. This summer he was named first recipient of the BC Grapegrowers' Association's new Viticulturist of the Year award. His peers recognized his good practices, hard work and leadership that have contributed to the BC wine industry's success. Read more on page 23. PHOTO / MYRNA STARK LEADER

Second farm locked down

Cases expose farms to risk as BC reopens

by PETER MITHAM

OLIVER – An outbreak of COVID-19 at an Oliver cherry grower in early July underscores the challenge the pandemic poses the farm sector as BC reopens. Communities across BC have been wary of outsiders during the COVID-19 pandemic, fearing an influx of non-locals could lead to an outbreak of the dreaded disease. The concerns led to extreme measures this spring designed to limit the interactions seasonal farm workers have with local communities.

See PANDEMIC on next page ↗

Growing more with less water

**DIESEL & PTO PUMPS
PVC & ALUMINUM PIPE
IRRIGATION REELS
DRIP IRRIGATION
CENTRE PIVOTS**

1.888.675.7999

WaterTec
IRRIGATION LTD.
watertecna.com

COVID-19 darkens sales outlook

by PETER MITHAM

VICTORIA – The province's farmers rang up a record \$3.9 billion in farm cash receipts in 2019, but the financial fallout from COVID-19 could paint a different picture for 2020.

The newly legal cannabis sector drove farmgate sales 13% higher in 2019 versus 2018. The province's licensed cannabis growers saw sales of \$361.5 million, up \$300 million from 2018. This pushed the crop to third spot among the more than 200 commodities produced on BC farms.

Dairy held the top spot with receipts of \$683 million in 2019, up \$47 million from 2018. Poultry ranked second, with revenues of \$429.3 million, up \$12 million from 2018.

BC agriculture minister Lana Popham framed the growth as underscoring the agriculture sector's resilience in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"We know the pandemic has impacted farmers greatly this year, but the farming sector's record economic growth in 2019 sets the sector

up for a strong recovery," she said in a statement.

However, growers across the province are scaling back production, either because of reduced demand from restaurants and hospitality businesses or as a result of labour shortages.

A recent survey by the BC Fruit Growers Association indicates that more than 67% of growers plan to harvest less fruit this year as a result of COVID-19. Dairy producers have also been cautious

See SMALLER on next page ↗

POSTES CANADA
Canada Post
Port payé
Post-Publications
40012122

CANADA POST
Postage paid
Publications Mail
40012122

Vol. 106 No. 8

Postmaster, Please return Undeliverable labels to:
Country Life in BC
36 Dale Road
Enderby, BC V0E 1V4