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No room

Slaughter space stalls growth of small-scale producers

TOM WALKER

MERRITT – Slaughter access remains the top barrier for small, local meat producers, according to the first-ever survey of the sector.

“We heard loud and clear across the province that the top three challenges for small-scale farmers are access to slaughter, access to cut-and-wrap and profitability,” says survey lead Corine Singfield, a director with the Small-Scale Meat Producers Association who farms in Bella Coola.

Conducted late last year, the survey solicited the

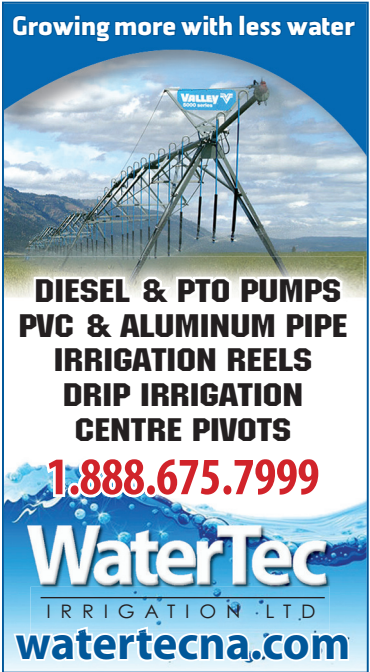
See SURVEY on next page ➔



Taking root

Colleen Roberts, the culinary gardener at Peak Cellars Winery in Lake Country, is busy planting tender vegetable seeds that will be transplanted into its half-acre vegetable garden. It provides produce for the winery’s onsite restaurant. MYRNA STARK LEADER

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Farmland values soar

PETER MITHAM

ABBOTSFORD – BC led Western Canada in Farm Credit Canada’s annual survey of farmland values, with growth topping 18% in 2021 – the strongest increase in a decade.

“We seem to have a bit of an acceleration in the rate of increase,” said FCC chief economist JP Gervais in presenting the findings to media in mid-March.

Nationally, farmland values rose 8.3%, led by Ontario at 22.2%. BC ranked second at

18.1%. This was well above the rest of the west, with Alberta farmland values rising just 3.6%, Saskatchewan up 7.6% and Manitoba up 9.9%.

FCC credited the increase in BC to a constrained land supply and strong farmgate revenues.

“BC [had] a lot of different areas where supply of land available for sale was really tight, and that tends to push up land values overall,” says Gervais.

This is seen in the large jump in values in the South Coast region, where hobby

farmers are a significant factor in competition for land. Many aren’t tied to farm incomes and can bid up prices to secure properties.

The South Coast saw values rise 33.7% in 2021, with values running as high as \$197,000 per acre. Even with FCC excluding the top and bottom 5% of sales, the average transaction value was \$134,700 an acre in the region.

Other regions saw significant increases at lower

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