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Ghosted

The irrigation lines at Jamieson Creek Ranch in Kamloops disappear into fog as cold, snowy weather gave way to unusually mild, rainy conditions in January. Meanwhile, a Level 5 drought continues in the Peace. See story, page 17. *DAKOTA ROBERTSON | WILD MANE PHOTOS*

Dairy farmers on the brink

Tight margins, high financing costs fuel talk of sales

PETER MITHAM

ABBOTSFORD – A growing number of dairy farms in the Fraser Valley are considering selling as narrow margins get tighter and high financing costs complicate succession plans.

“The dairy [sector] is particularly challenged,” says Karen Taylor, director of corporate finance, agriculture and agribusiness with BMO Financial Group in Abbotsford, who addressed a workshop

Dairy farmers ▶

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Groundwater showdown

PETER MITHAM

GIBSONS – Nearly a year after a deadline for existing well owners to apply for groundwater licences and preserve their historic water rights, Sunshine Coast farms are getting a taste of what the future could hold for thousands of groundwater users across BC.

Raquel Kolof was in the midst of processing animals at her on-farm abattoir January 19 when a natural resources officer from the BC Ministry of Forests pulled up in full

uniform, including bullet-proof vest, and armed.

The officer stated he was investigating a complaint about a new well and unauthorized groundwater use.

While the well was new according to definitions set by the province – any well whose first use occurred after February 29, 2016 – Kolof had followed all the rules when the well was drilled in 2019.

“The \$250 licence fee was processed on May 27, 2021 and I received emails with the completed application and

receipt,” she says. “I was told it could take approximately four years to complete the licence process.”

In the meantime, she understood that she could use the water as outlined in her application. Kolof’s is one of thousands of licence applications that have yet to receive approval from the province.

Kolof is not alone. The officer also visited another farm. It had drilled a well but had not yet applied for a

Province steps up ▶

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