

DAVID SCHMIDT

DISASTER

DAIRY

BC agriculture loses a champion

Erosion claims dozens of acres of farmland

Remuneration to increase for dairy directors

3

7

13



50

1973
2023

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Water plans kick off

Farmers want action

TOM WALKER & PETER MITHAM

DUNCAN – BC signed an historic watershed planning agreement with the Cowichan Tribes last May that set the stage for the province’s first water sustainability plan, but local farmers say the pressures on the region’s farms can’t wait.

No quick fix ►

For a good cause

Grant Sauer, vice-president of the BC Youth in Agriculture Foundation, makes a bid during the silent auction at the PNE’s Evening for Agriculture event, December 9. While the weather outside was frightful, more than 60 people gathered at the PNE fairgrounds to raise \$18,000 for the foundation, which supports 4-H BC, Agriculture in the Classroom projects and other endeavours as it lays a foundation for the future. Read more on page 41. ANNA KLOCHKO

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AI case count slowing

PETER MITHAM

ABBOTSFORD – The latest wave of avian influenza cases levelled off in December, coming in slightly below last year’s count at the same time. “This year’s fall wave started approximately three weeks earlier than in 2022 and started to slow down a few weeks ahead of the 2022 wave,” said Steve Heppell, president of the BC Poultry Association and a turkey grower in Abbotsford. “While the overall number of cases and the duration of the fall

waves are approximately the same, the 2023 wave started and is coming to an end earlier than 2022.” Canadian Food Inspection Agency statistics indicate a total of 53 premises in BC were infected with highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza between October 20 and December 18, primarily in the Fraser Valley. Of these, five were non-commercial operations. Commercial farms have not reported an infection since December 9. A year ago, the tally stood at 56 farms between

November 16 and December 18, with all but two premises being commercial farms. But if the flight paths of wild birds and conditions on the ground play a role in which premises become infected, biosecurity is also key. The industry has touted the success of its red level biosecurity measures put in place to keep the highly contagious disease in check. The province’s top vet, Dr. Theresa Burns, reinstated orders this fall requiring flock

Retail supplies ►

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