

<b>COWICHAN</b>	Title concerns add uncertainty to land deals	7
<b>CO-OP</b>	BC Tree Fruits members told to play by the rules	13
<b>CLIMATE</b>	Water woes: groundwater under pressure across BC	19



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# COUNTRY LIFE IN BC

The agricultural news source in British Columbia since 1915

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**Bare hills**

The River Forecast Centre says the snowpack in the Okanagan is just 67% of normal, noting Kelowna has experienced the least precipitation since 1900 this winter. While the South Coast and Vancouver Island, at 39%, are reporting snowpacks well below normal, the drought-stricken Peace is finally showing signs of recovery with its snowpack at 122% of normal. MYRNA STARK LEADER

## Farms face scrutiny

### WorkSafeBC stepping up enforcement

**KELLY SINOSKI**

ABBOTSFORD – Dairy farmers will be seeing more visits from WorkSafeBC as part of an effort to boost safety and compliance on BC farms.

AgSafeBC safety advisor Emily Faykosh told a BC Dairy Association lunch-and-learn at the Pacific Agriculture Show in January that a more formal approach to on-site dairy farm inspections is on its way. This approach could involve specialized teams, including occupational hygiene officers, and potentially more administrative penalties, she says.

“Things have evolved a lot.”

*Dairy farms* ▶

**50% COST SHARED UP TO \$140K FOR BC FARMS**



SCAN TO APPLY

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**MORE INFO ON PAGE 3**

## Budget heralds funding freeze

**PETER MITHAM**

VICTORIA – Cash is tight, agriculture minister Lana Popham has repeatedly told producers at meetings around the province since returning to the portfolio in November 2024, and this year's budget confirmed it.

Delivered February 17, the budget held the line on operating funding for the agriculture ministry at \$108 million while reducing total funding to \$134.7 million from \$151.2 million, thanks largely to a cut in Production

Insurance.

The BC Agriculture Council says the insignificant increase to the ministry's operating budget “represents a missed opportunity to strengthen investment” in the sector.

“This budget was presented as a plan to prepare British Columbia for ongoing economic uncertainty, with a focus on prioritizing critical services,” says BCAC executive director Danielle Synotte.

“However, farmers and ranchers provide a stable and reliable supply of food and agricultural products – also a

critical service. This feels like a step in the wrong direction.”

Synotte co-chaired the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy, which recommended eliminating the provincial sales tax (PST) on all agriculture, aquaculture, and food inputs and equipment.

Instead, the budget will expand the PST to professional services, including accounting, architecture and engineering services this fall, adding 7% to

*BCAC laments* ▶

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