

## **Cariboo Agriculture Research Alliance (CARA)**



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## **Executive Summary**

*for:*

**Cariboo Cattlemen's Association &  
Cariboo Region**

*Submitted by:*

**Toma and Bouma Management Consultants  
Edmonton in association with David Zirnhelt**

June 15, 2017

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Working Group  
c/o Cariboo Cattlemen's Association  
Williams Lake, BC

Dear Committee Members:

We are pleased to submit our final report on this new Cariboo regional agriculture research alliance (CARA) concept. Our report includes:

- Introduction and objectives;
- Models of agriculture research for consideration;
- Community meeting comments on an alliance model;
- Context and considerations for planning and operations;
- CARA Organization design and plans;
- The Cariboo Region applied research database and observations.

The research background underscores the need for the alliance and the community comments reflect that view. Based on these findings and the current context, the new research alliance has been designed to support both projects and extension of the findings from those projects. It is important to understand the past research outcomes for extension but it is equally important to develop a future focused organization for agriculture adaptation, innovation and growth in the region.

We see a very good opportunity to develop a strong regional organization based on the research and model developed herein. The keys to success are involving the communities, the agriculture leaders and most importantly the user groups. We look forward to discussing it further with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Toma', followed by a horizontal line.

Darrell Toma, MSc, PAg, CMC

## Acknowledgements

This project has involved a number of participating organizations (over 25) and individuals (50). We appreciate the assistance and advice provided to the project by the project management committee including:

- Cordy Cox, Cariboo Cattlemen's Association;
- Clint Thompson, Cariboo Cattlemen's Association;
- Rob Borsato, District H. Farmers Institute;
- Lynda Atkinson, BCAC, FARMED;
- Lori Fogarty, FARMED, Growing North Cariboo Society;
- Nicole Pressey, BC Ministry of Agriculture;
- Samantha Charlton, BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative;
- Emily MacNair, BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative;
- Erica Nitchie, BC Ministry of Agriculture;
- All the people attending the community meetings and the workshops.

It is notable that the communities in the region and industry leaders are determined to partner with education and research professionals to help address this important alliance venture to serve the need for high quality and reliable knowledge sharing. From the combined interest demonstrated in the open and rich discussions, the concept shows that it can be a “win-win” for many people in the Cariboo region.

Funding for this project has been provided in-part by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia through the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC under *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The program is delivered by the BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative.

The Governments of Canada and British Columbia are committed to working with industry partners. Opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Governments of Canada or British Columbia, or the Investment Agriculture Foundation.



## Executive Summary

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### Cariboo Agriculture Research Alliance Concept Development

In 2013-2014, the *Cariboo Adaptation Strategies* planning process brought together the Cariboo region's agricultural producers and local and provincial government partners to evaluate climate change impacts on local agricultural production, and to develop strategies and actions to address the associated challenges. The need for local research, and effective communication of research results, was identified as a high priority to support Cariboo producers with adapting to climate change. A critical first step – outlined in the *Cariboo Adaptation Strategies* – is to “strengthen the capacity for a coordinated regional approach to agricultural research.”<sup>1</sup>

During the winter of 2016 and early 2017, this project gathered input from local organizations through interviews, meetings, and workshops. These mechanisms gathered feedback and brought interested groups and individuals together to determine priorities and to define the model for a local research alliance. Through the project, the foundation for a coordinated approach has evolved and is outlined in this summary document. While the alliance is still in a developmental stage, this document can serve as a “roadmap” so that the transition to initial startup operation can occur in 2017.

### Vision and Objectives for the Alliance

The Cariboo agriculture research alliance will be seen as the steward of Cariboo applied agriculture research, providing access to research outputs, helping to set regional priorities, and providing coordination for programs and projects which are important, on behalf of ranchers, farmers and other user groups. A name suggested was CARA.

*The underlying objectives of the Alliance are to:*

- Provide leadership on agriculture applied research problems and access to local and new knowledge;
- Provide extension and technology transfer opportunities;
- Use technology infrastructure solutions and tools (free and purchased) to allow open access;
- Manage and steward Cariboo applied research reports and data, while providing access to them; and
- Provide the Cariboo region's farmers and ranchers with benefits and opportunities to grow and sustain their operations

### Many Interested Organizations Exist

CARA will be an organization of organizations. Participants from the following organizations (32) have expressed interest in being involved:

- **Province-wide industry organizations:** BC Agriculture Council, BC Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative, BC Association of Farmers' Markets, BC Cattlemen's Association, BC Forage Council, BC Sheep Federation, BC Honey Producers' Association, BC Invasive Species Council, BC Livestock Co-op;
- **Local organizations:** Cariboo Cattlemen's Association, Cariboo Growers Co-op, Cariboo Family Enrichment, CEEDs, Community Futures Williams Lake, District H Farmers Institute, FARMED, Growing North Cariboo Society, Quesnel Farmers' Market, Quesnel Cattlemen's Association, Quesnel Ag Centre of Excellence working group; South Cariboo Agri-Culture Enterprise Centre;
- **Government agencies:** BC Ministry of Agriculture, Cariboo Regional District, North Central Local Government Association;
- **First Nations,** including: Tl'etinqox First Nation, Canim Lake First Nation, Tsilhqot'in National Government Stewardship Council, Ulkatcho First Nation, Williams Lake Indian Band; and Xatsull First Nation; and
- **Academic institutions,** including: Thompson Rivers University (TRU), College of New Caledonia (CNC), University of Northern BC.

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<sup>1</sup> Toma and Bouma Management Consultants, Edmonton were selected (along with David Zirnhelt) to deliver the project which took place between October of 2016 and May of 2017.

## Legal Form (Structure) Options

A number of options exist for the legal form (structure) of the proposed agriculture alliance including:

- No legal form, as an informal network;
- Society with organizational members and associate members;
- Incorporated non-profit;
- Co-operative;
- Joint venture agreement among organizations; and
- Program of college with producer direction.

The recommended approach for the Cariboo research alliance is a **joint venture alliance for a 5 year term (renewable)** among the core founding organizations (such as TRU, CNC, Forage Council, Cariboo Cattlemen's Association, etc.), alliance partners (funders and in-kind) and stakeholders (regional groups and individuals who want to participate). This group can provide a strong agriculture cluster for many developments.

This model offers quick start-up, continued individual autonomy of participating groups, potential for piloting the organization and the ability to match applied research projects with supplemental funds and resources. It is also an inclusive and open approach. When operating, the direction for the alliance will be provided through a board of directors, and subject-specific committees. **The “mechanics” of the alliance will be managed through administrative staff support and projects will be contracted via the lead administrative organization.** Coordination and collaboration will be enhanced and the agreement will need to define roles, goals and the structure, along with dispute and asset ownership issues. The new database will need to be housed within the structure.

## Near term Activities and Budget

The expected activities over the initial months and first operational year include:<sup>2</sup>

- Recruiting a founding working group (later move to Board of Directors -possibly from the Steering Committee);
- Defining a lead administrative agency;
- Securing funds/ resources/ agreements to meet the business plan goals;
- Developing partnerships and organizational capacity to help accomplish mutual strategic goals;
- Completing a number of producer- driven projects, based on their gaps and needs; and
- Defining a longer term business plan with performance measures.

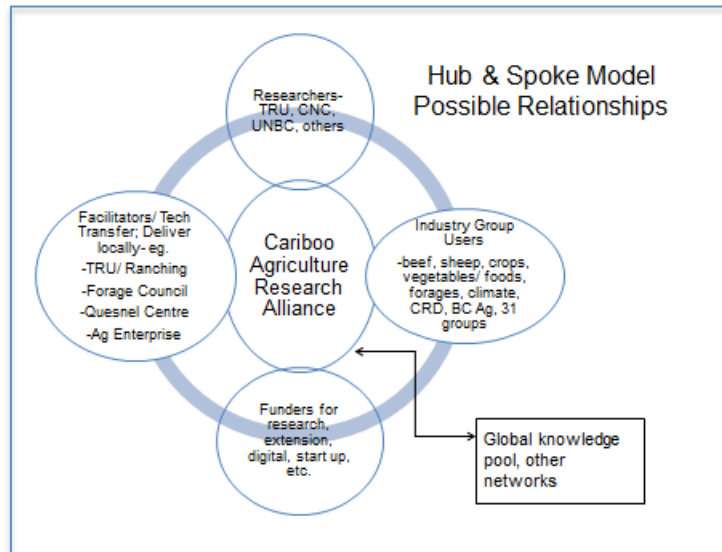
The Cariboo applied research database totals 134 reports. They are in a separate document. These reports have been assembled for access and use on Mendeley, which is a free open source digital library. The stewardship of the database and Mendeley use will be under management of the working group. A distribution of the reports is noted below.

Livestock	28
Crops	28
Region/ Community	24
Environment	23
Forestry	15
Agriculture	16
Total	134

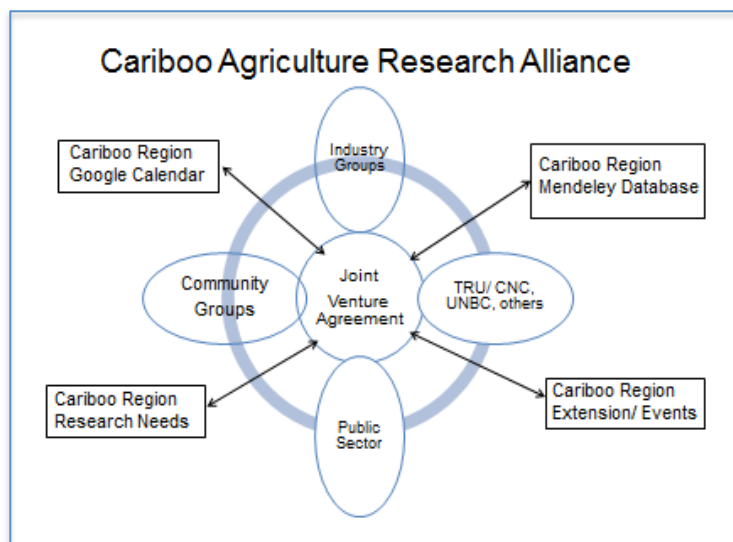
The proposed budget for the new CARA alliance is in the order of \$202,000 annually and some activities can be started immediately with a joint working group (such as using the database). An operating budget will be needed as well as development of a joint venture agreement for start-up operations. The diagram below shows the possible Alliance structure and relationships.

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<sup>2</sup> The operational and aspirational aspects discussed herein are based on models which work, plus community and expert input and the interests of Cariboo region organizations as expressed by participants at the workshops, meetings and interviews.



The core functions are noted in the next diagram.



Contacts in the Cariboo region for the continued start-up progress of the CARA alliance include: Cariboo Cattlemen ([cariboo cattlemen@gmail.com](mailto:cariboo cattlemen@gmail.com)), David Zirnhelt ([davidzirnhelt@hotmail.com](mailto:davidzirnhelt@hotmail.com)) Rob Borsato, Lynda Atkinson, Lori Fogarty ([info@farmed.ca](mailto:info@farmed.ca)) and Nicole Pressey ([Nicole.Pressey@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Nicole.Pressey@gov.bc.ca)).

We appreciate all of the vigorous input, leadership, discussion and interest shown by the people attending the workshops and meetings. A gem of a new and vital idea is starting to take root.