

Strategic Plan

2010 – 2015

for the

**BC Association of Agricultural
Fairs and Exhibitions**

February 2010

Funding provided by:



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A. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural fairs have had a long history in British Columbia since the first fair was held in Victoria in October 1861. In January 1910, the Department of Agriculture organized the “Provincial Agricultural Fairs Association”.

Fairs and exhibitions have been an integral part of communities across BC for these many years providing a community focal point for the celebration and promotion of local agriculture and food.

In 2010, the BC Association of Fairs and Exhibitions – now better known as “BC Fairs” – is celebrating its 100th anniversary as an association representing agricultural fairs and exhibitions throughout British Columbia.

While this Association looks back on a century of achievement – primarily through the programs and services it has provided to member fairs and exhibitions – it also recognizes the serious challenges that lie ahead.

As this significant milestone was approaching, the Board of Directors agreed that a strategic plan was needed as a roadmap for the next three to five years to help the Association move forward with confidence. This was an appropriate time to define the current mission and vision, identify the key goals and objectives, and develop strategies and actions to achieve these objectives.

Funding for this strategic plan was provided in part by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC through programs it delivers on behalf of the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

The name “BC Fairs” will be used in this document to refer to the BC Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions.

B. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In June 2009, Tony Kluge (AgroWest Consulting, Sidney) and Walter Goerzen (Goerzen Agri Consulting, Chilliwack) were invited to submit a proposal to develop a 5-year strategic plan for BC Fairs. The initial proposal, submitted to BC Fairs in July, was subsequently restructured and approved for funding under the Small Projects Program of the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

It was agreed that Goerzen and Kluge would collaborate to provide leadership, facilitation and secretariat services. A steering committee, to be named by the BC Fairs Board of Directors, would provide general direction and feedback.

The strategic planning process would generally follow the “Guide to Strategic Planning” developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 2001 for the 14 initiatives funded under the federal-provincial Agri-Food Futures Fund.

In simple terms, strategic planning is a process that sets out to address five key questions:

1. Who are we?
2. Where are we now?
3. Where do we want to go?
4. How do we get there?
5. How will we know when we've arrived?

In order to ensure that the strategic plan would meet the needs of BC Fairs and its members, the planning process began with a survey to gather information about the members as well as their opinions about the Association, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Two survey questionnaires were developed in consultation with the steering committee, one for member fairs and exhibitions and the other for commercial and associate members. A third questionnaire was developed for non-member fairs. The survey questionnaires were sent electronically by the BC Fairs office to member fairs and exhibitions in September and to commercial members in October. Completed questionnaires were returned to the BC Fairs office.

A series of planning meetings and workshops were held with the steering committee and the Board of Directors as follows:

2009	Oct 5	Steering Committee	Abbotsford
	Oct 15	BC Fairs Board	Vernon
	Dec 9	Steering Committee	Abbotsford
2010	Jan 30	BC Fairs Board	Abbotsford

Initial survey results were presented to the steering committee in early October. At that time, the existing Mission Statement posted on the BC Fairs website was reviewed and revised, and a new Vision Statement was drafted. The steering committee proposed six broad goals, and a number of objectives were identified for each of the goals.

At the strategic planning workshop with the BC Fairs Board of Directors in mid-October, the survey results were reviewed together with the revised Mission Statement and the draft Vision Statement. Core values and principles were discussed. The six goals proposed by the steering committee were accepted by the Board, and additional objectives were identified for these goals.

Following the workshop with the Board of Directors, Goerzen and Kluge made a presentation on the strategic planning process and progress to date at the BC Fairs Convention in Vernon on October 16. This was followed by two Round Table discussion sessions in which delegates were invited to offer their opinions in person. All comments and suggestions were recorded.

The steering committee met again in early December to review the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths (SWOT) from the survey results, confirm the objectives for the six goals, and identify strategies and actions required to realize these objectives. The committee also began to list some expected outcomes once these strategies and actions are implemented.

Kluge and Goerzen analyzed the last of the surveys received by the BC Fairs office and continued to revise and edit the goals and objectives, strategies and actions, and expected outcomes to incorporate advice received from the steering committee. The final survey results and updated sections of the plan were then discussed at a second workshop with the Board of Directors (including two new members) at the end of January.

In order to implement this strategic plan, it is essential that BC Fairs prepare an annual work plan for each calendar or fiscal year. The work plan should identify the priority objectives for that year, together with specific strategies and actions that will be undertaken during the 12-month period. The work plan should also be linked to the annual operating budget to ensure that costs are realistically estimated and all possible sources of funding are identified.

C. ASSOCIATION PROFILE

In April 1921, the BC Fairs Association was incorporated under the *Societies Act*. In June 1982, the name of the association was changed to the Association of BC Fairs and Exhibitions and, in June 1984, it was changed to its present name: the BC Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions. In recent years, the association has become better known by its short name: BC Fairs.

The Constitution and Bylaws, amended at the AGM on October 17, 2009, state:

The purpose of this Association shall be to encourage the activities of agricultural fairs and exhibitions by:

- (a) Acting as a liaison between agricultural fairs and exhibitions.
- (b) Keeping all members informed of successful or unsuccessful innovations in the industry.
- (c) Alerting members re: impending changes or new legislation that will affect their operations.
- (d) Holding an annual meeting for the exchange of mutually helpful information.
- (e) Advising government departments and authorities on matters relating to the operations of members of the Association and recommend policy.
- (f) Harmonizing circuits and coordinating show dates.
- (g) Encouraging the participation of youth in agriculture through 4-H and other youth programs.

The following Mission Statement was posted on the BC Fairs website in 2009:

The BC Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions provides programs, services and leadership to agricultural fairs and exhibitions so they may adapt to change, educate the public and build for the future.

The following Objective was also posted on the BC Fairs website in 2009:

The objective of the BC Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions is to educate the public about the importance of agriculture, where their food comes from and the value agriculture adds to the economy of British Columbia.

Member Fairs and Exhibitions

According to the Constitution and Bylaws, as amended on October 17, 2009:

Any Association in British Columbia which has held an annual fair or exhibition for the previous two years shall be eligible for membership provided that:

- (i) the fair or exhibition has met the current approved criteria regarding the number of categories as approved by the Board of Directors.
- (ii) the association is currently registered and in good standing under the Society Act, the Farmers' and Women's Institutes Act or under an independent act of the Province of British Columbia.

BC Fairs Strategic Plan

- (iii) A fair or exhibition association seeking membership in the BC Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions must hold such possible membership in abeyance until an evaluation of their fair or exhibition has been completed.

Currently, there are 23 recognized agricultural categories: baking, canning / preserving, dairy products, eggs, field crops, flowers, fruits, honey, vegetables, wine, beef, cavies, dairy, goats, heavy horses, light horses, llamas / alpacas, pigeons, poultry, rabbits, sheep, swine and waterfowl. Fairs and exhibitions are required to have 10 recognized agricultural categories in order to become, and remain, members in good standing of BC Fairs.

In 2009, BC Fairs had 48 member fairs and exhibitions which were placed into one of three Divisions based on average annual attendance over the previous three years.

Division 1 attendance 3,000 and under *

Aldergrove Fair Days	Aldergrove	3,000
Ashcroft & District Fall Fair	Ashcroft	999
Creston Valley Fall Fair	Creston	2,935
Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust	Delta	900
Grand Forks & District Fall Fair	Grand Forks	< 2,000
Kiskatinaw Fall Fair	Kiskatinaw	3,000
Kootenay Lake Agricultural Fall Fair	Crawford Bay	550
Lakes District Fall Fair	Francois Lake	3,000
Lighthouse Country Fall Fair	Bowser	1,300
Mayne Island Fall Fair	Mayne Island	1,350
Nicola Valley Fall Fair	Merritt	2,500
Pass Creek Regional Exhibition	Robson	2,200
Peachland Fall Fair	Peachland	974
Pender Island Fall Fair	Pender Island	1,800
Powell River Fall Fair	Powell River	3,000
Princeton & District Fall Fair	Princeton	830
Provincial Winter Fair	Kamloops	3,000
Quesnel Fall Fair	Quesnel	1,150
Rossland Fall Fair	Rossland	750
Sooke Fall Fair	Sooke	1,200
Summerland Fall Fair	Summerland	2,500
Tlell Fall Fair	Tlell	1,012
Williams Lake Harvest Festival	Williams Lake	2,800

* table shows attendance reported for 2008

Division 2 attendance 3,001 – 20,000 *

Agassiz Fall Fair & Corn Festival	Agassiz	10,090
Coombs Fair	Coombs	8,100
Bulkley Valley Exhibition	Smithers	18,558
Chilliwack Exhibition	Chilliwack	20,000
Cobble Hill Fair	Cobble Hill	4,010
Comox Valley Exhibition	Courtenay	4,200
Cowichan Exhibition	Duncan	18,000
Kootenay Country Fair	Cranbrook	3,257
Luxton Fall Fair	Luxton	8,000
Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows Country Fest	Maple Ridge	14,000
Nechako Valley Exhibition	Vanderhoof	4,380
North Peace Fall Fair Society	Fort St. John	4,900
North Thompson Fall Fair & Rodeo	Barriere	9,000
Rock Creek & Boundary Fair	Rock Creek	10,245
Salmon Arm Fair	Salmon Arm	8,634
Salt Spring Island Fall Fair	Salt Spring Island	10,000

* table shows attendance reported for 2008

Division 3 attendance over 20,000 *

Abbotsford Agrifair	Abbotsford	42,000
Alberni District Fall Fair	Port Alberni	22,283
Cloverdale Rodeo & Exhibition	Cloverdale	80,000
Dawson Creek Exhibition	Dawson Creek	26,000
Interior Provincial Exhibition	Armstrong	151,324
Pacific National Exhibition	Vancouver	753,298
Prince George Exhibition	Prince George	38,000
Saanich Fair	Saanich	49,600
Vancouver Island Exhibition	Nanaimo	20,055

* table shows attendance reported for 2008

Based on the attendance numbers reported for 2008, almost 1.4 million people visited fairs and exhibitions throughout BC that year.

The number of survey returns by member fairs and exhibitions were as follows:

Division 1	13 / 23	(57%)
Division 2	13 / 16	(81%)
Division 3	<u>7</u> / <u>9</u>	(78%)
Total	33 / 48	(69%)

The survey results for each Division are tabulated in Appendix 4.

Commercial and Associate Members

According to the Constitution and Bylaws, as amended on October 17, 2009:

- (a) Any individual, firm or organization interested in the improvement of agricultural fairs and exhibitions in British Columbia shall be eligible for associate membership upon approval by the Board of Directors and on payment of annual membership dues.
- (b) Any individual, firm or organization who earn income from doing business directly with agricultural fairs and exhibitions in British Columbia shall be eligible for commercial membership upon approval by the Board of Directors and on payment of annual membership dues.

The 2009 BC Fairs Directory lists 25 Commercial and two Associate Members:

Commercial

Admitec Inc.	Anjou, Quebec
Bells & Whistles Mini Golf	Abbotsford, BC
Briere Production Group Inc.	Burnaby, BC
C-Lovers Fish & Chips	Coquitlam, BC
Canada Ticket Inc.	Langley, BC
Capri Insurance Services Ltd.	Kelowna, BC
Central Display & Tents	Price George, BC
Christopher Pemberton Hypnotist	Bothell, WA
Dikor Ribbon Technologies	Vernon, BC
Fresh Thoughts	Kelowna, BC
Gordo's Concessions	Port Coquitlam
ICL Services	Coquitlam, BC
Ishdafish Music	Mission, BC
Jack Jackson	Calgary, AB
Lemon Heaven	Abbotsford, BC
Medallion Event Specialists	Abbotsford, BC
Mini Melts BC	Victoria, BC
Notable Entertainment & Events Ltd.	Port Coquitlam
Qué Bolá Magic	Denman Island
Shooting Star Amusements Ltd.	Langley, BC
Suncorp Banking Systems	Kelowna, BC
Thornley Hayne Communications	Surrey, BC
Versteeg Consulting Inc.	Mill Bay, BC
West Coast Amusements Ltd.	Chilliwack, BC
West Coast Lumberjack Show	Squamish, BC

Associate

BC 4-H Provincial Council	Enderby, BC
BC Safety Authority	New Westminster

Governance

The Constitution and Bylaws set out the structure and election process for the Board of Directors as follows:

- (a) The Board of Directors of the Association shall consist of nine and no more than ten directors, four of whom shall be elected each year for a two-year term by vote of the representatives present at the Annual [General] Meeting and one who shall be appointed by the [Commercial] Members for a two-year term, and the immediate Past President who shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may appoint a Director at large for a period of one year. Any individual member or employee of a member association in good standing shall be eligible for election to the office of Director of the Association.
- (b) The President, First Vice-President [and] Second Vice-President shall be elected for a one year term from the Directorship by the Directors at the first Board meeting immediately following the Annual [General] Meeting.
- (c) The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President and Immediate Past President. Should a vacancy occur on the Executive Committee, the President shall have the authority to fill such vacancy from the Directors at large.
- (d) The Board of Directors shall have general supervision of the affairs and policies of the Association. It shall hold office until the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting. The Board of Directors shall be empowered to fill any vacancy in its numbers until a replacement can be elected by the representatives at the next Annual General Meeting.

The Constitution and Bylaws were amended in October 2009 with respect to the position of Executive Director. They now state that:

- (a) The Board of Directors shall hire an Executive Director.
- (b) The Executive Director shall report directly to the Board through the President.

Finances

An association incorporated under the *Society Act* must be a not-for-profit entity. The BC Fairs website states that the BC Association of Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions is a non-profit organization.

Over the past several years, one of the most critical issues facing BC Fairs has been the uncertainty of annual operating funds.

Government Grants

Since 1997, the provincial government had provided an annual grant of \$375,000 to be divided among the Association and its member fairs and exhibitions, but this grant was eliminated in 2002 as a result of the Core Services Review. To ease the financial hardship and allow BC Fairs to seek alternative options for funding operations, the Ministry gave the Association a transition grant of \$100,000 for 2002. However, no grants were provided for 2003 or 2004.

In March 2005, an annual grant of \$150,000 was reinstated by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. The condition of this grant was that BC Fairs could use up to 2/3 or \$100,000 to support the operations of the Association, but had allocate at least 1/3 or \$50,000 to fairs and exhibitions for projects to promote agricultural awareness and education.

Last summer, I attended fairs and exhibitions around the province and saw the dialogue and understanding that happen when local producers and food consumers get together. This annual grant will keep that dialogue going, and encourage more people to choose local, healthy BC food.

Hon. John van Dongen, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
News Release, March 4, 2005

The theme of the project had to be different each year. During the four years this funding was provided, the following projects were delivered by BC Fairs:

- 2005 *From Land and Sea to You and Me*
- 2006 *Reach Out to Youth*
- 2007 *Ag Education is Fun for Everyone*
- 2008 *Youth Project – Go Green*

The following year, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands invited BC Fairs to develop a proposal for a new Provincial Fair / Award of Excellence Program. In February 2006, BC Fairs submitted a proposal with the theme “*Showcase of Agriculture*”. The proposed budget for this program was \$175,000 to provide start up funds to participating fairs and exhibitions and cash prizes for the first, second and third place winners in each Division. In April, BC Fairs received a grant of \$225,000 for this program.

Every region in BC has an agriculture industry and we need to do more to show the importance of the industry and the people in it. By strengthening the role of fairs and exhibitions, we will increase the public’s awareness of the wide variety of BC agriculture products and the contributions our farmers make to BC’s economy.

Hon. Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands
News Release, April 3, 2006

BC Fairs managed to keep the 2006 Award of Excellence Program on budget and consequently had surplus funds of \$50,000, which it set aside for start-up funding in 2007. The theme of the program proposal submitted for 2007 was “Agritourism at its Finest” and the proposed budget was \$225,000. The proposal was approved but, because of the carry-over from 2006, the grant for 2007 was reduced to \$175,000.

Last year’s inaugural Showcase of Agriculture Program, which promoted the diversity of our agriculture sector, was a huge success. Not only did it raise awareness of our agriculture industry and the people behind it, but it also promoted the many fantastic fairs and exhibitions held throughout BC. These events are where most British Columbians come into direct contact with our farmers and this is how we will raise public awareness about the importance of the industry.

Hon. Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands
News Release, April 1, 2007

For 2008, the year in which British Columbia celebrated its 150th anniversary as a province, BC Fairs submitted a program proposal with the theme “Let’s Celebrate 150 Years of Agriculture in BC!” In order to provide extra incentives for fairs and exhibitions to participate in 2008, BC Fairs proposed to increase the amount of start-up funding available to each fair and also increase the amount of the cash prizes for the winners. The budget for this enhanced program proposal was \$365,000, of which the Association was prepared to contribute \$50,000 cash and \$90,000 in-kind (i.e. volunteer labour). In January 2008, BC Fairs had requested a grant of \$225,000 and, in April, the Association received a grant of \$175,000.

In early 2009, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands cancelled both grants for the Association. The impact of this unexpected decision is clearly shown in the financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2009 which provide comparison figures for revenue and expenses from the previous year:

	2009	2008
Revenue	\$ 65,120	\$395,391
Expenses	\$285,750	\$440,657
Gain (Loss)	(\$220,630)	(\$ 45,266)

Of the total revenues received by BC Fairs in 2007/08, \$325,000 was from the two provincial government grants. In that fiscal year, the Association provided over \$200,000 in project start-up funds and cash prizes to member fairs and exhibitions. In 2008/09, the only sources of revenue were membership fees, convention revenue and advertising sales.

Membership Fees

One of the non-government sources of revenue for BC Fairs is the annual membership fees from fairs and exhibitions as well as from commercial and associate members. Recognizing that fairs and exhibitions have limited operating funds themselves, Association membership fees have traditionally been modest and scaled to the size of the fair or exhibition. In 2008/09, the revenue from membership fees was \$14,642 compared to \$15,548 in 2007/08.

Convention Revenue

Convention registrations are the largest non-government source of revenue. Assuming that the registration fees do not change significantly from one year to the next, the amount of revenue is directly linked to the number of delegates that attend the annual Convention. Ideally, the Convention revenues should cover all expenses, i.e. the Convention should be revenue neutral. However, the financial statements for the year ending August 31, 2009 show that the Convention operated at a loss in 2008 as well as the previous year:

	2009	2008
Convention Revenue	\$ 34,636	\$ 37,649
Convention Expenses	\$ 55,325	\$ 53,391
Gain (Loss)	(\$ 20,689)	(\$ 15,742)

Advertising Sales

Currently, the only other source of revenue for BC Fairs is advertising, primarily for the Association newsletter, "Livewire". In 2008/09, advertising sales were \$7,651 compared with \$4,830 the previous year.

D. MISSION, VISION, VALUES & PRINCIPLES

As part of the strategic planning process, the Steering Committee proposed a revision of the current Mission Statement (page 4) and a new Vision Statement, both of which were then presented to and approved by the Board of Directors.

The Mission Statement is a broad comprehensive statement of an organization's purpose, and provides a frame of reference for all major decisions. It defines the mandate of the organization, why it exists, who it serves, and what it provides.

Mission of BC Fairs:

To provide leadership, resources and services to agricultural fairs, exhibitions and related events so they can effectively celebrate the diversity and importance of local agriculture in communities throughout BC.

The Vision Statement is a clear description of what an organization aspires to be and/or do over the long term, and provides a common direction for the strategy and action plans.

Vision for BC Fairs:

A sustainable provincial association that represents agricultural fairs, exhibitions, festivals and related events, and increases awareness of BC agriculture through alliances with other organizations.

A value or principle is a general statement representing the basic foundation of beliefs and values that underlie how the group will conduct itself. The group will articulate its own unique principles and values based on the needs and values of its members and on its mission and vision.

Values and Principles of BC Fairs:

- Respect for People, especially Volunteers
- Integrity / Honesty / Transparency
- Competence / Best Practices
- Collaboration
- Mentoring

E. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and recognizing the opportunities and threats for that organization (also known as a SWOT Analysis) is a fundamental part of the strategic planning process.

A summary of key points from the survey questionnaires completed by member fairs and commercial members, as well as from discussions with the Steering Committee and the Board of Directors, is presented below. A complete list of responses to the survey is provided in Appendix 6: SWOT Analysis – Member Fairs & Exhibitions and Appendix 7: SWOT Analysis – Commercial Members.

Strengths to Build On

- 100 years of BC Fairs Association history and experience
- common mission of education and promotion of agriculture to the public
- a single, large organization representing all members; strength in numbers
- advocacy and liaison with provincial government and other agencies / associations, and potential funding partners
- widening the scope and source of funding opportunities
- networking, sharing information with other fairs and exhibitions
- positive value of annual convention
- networking and connections to CAFE and IAFE
- administrative support in communications, insurance and regional activities
- a strong commercial and associate membership group
- a sound evaluation program

Weaknesses to Overcome

- loss of core funding support from government
- lack of program funding
- diversity of member fairs in size, location and needs
- lack of recognition for fairs in outlying regions
- little publicity and promotion of fairs to the public; BC Fairs is unknown
- insufficient training for directors, conveners and evaluators of fairs
- relatively narrow membership base of BC Fairs
- weak relationships with various related organizations
- commercial agricultural associations lack of involvement in BC Fairs
- lack of a strong and clear vision for the future of BC Fairs
- remaining relevant to a changing demographic

Opportunities to Capture

- possibility of expanding the membership base to include non-member fairs, festivals and other related events
- sponsorship funding sources
- improved government advocacy by BC Fairs
- new and strengthened existing relationships with other agricultural and tourism organizations
- programs and services that provide greater benefit and value to members
- more regional activities and programs
- increased awareness and interest of public in agriculture and food production
- buy-local, eat-fresh, grow-your-own and other healthy living movements
- enhanced relationships with and support of commercial members
- commercial agriculture industry interest and support
- changing demographic – both seniors and youth
- social media use in promoting fairs

Threats to Avoid

- stagnation, becoming un-needed, loss of members, dissolving, extinction
- lack of funding to continue programs of BC Fairs
- agriculture no longer a strong presence at fairs, in government and with the public
- apathy towards agriculture, replaced by modern technology
- rising cost of membership vs. value to member fairs
- not open to change, not encouraging new wave thinking
- being influenced by corporate interests and funding partners' agendas
- lack of appreciation and value of commercial members
- competition from other community entertainment / celebration events

F. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives in a Strategic Plan answer the key question:
Where do we want to go?

For BC Fairs, six broad goals were stated:

- 1. Education**
- 2. Member Services**
- 3. Relationship Building**
- 4. Commercial Members**
- 5. Funding**
- 6. Administration**

For each broad goal, a number of specific objectives were identified:

GOAL 1. Education

Objectives:

1. Promote agricultural awareness
2. Serve as information central
3. Develop best practices
4. Update exhibit and judging guidelines

GOAL 2. Member Services

Objectives:

1. Improve communications
2. Revise / expand evaluation checklist
3. Facilitate networking and mentoring
4. Coordinate regional workshops

GOAL 3. Relationship Building

Objectives:

1. Develop stronger relationships with key organizations
2. Encourage other agricultural fairs to become members
3. Invite agricultural festivals to become members

GOAL 4. Commercial Members

Objectives:

1. Enhance relationships with commercial members
2. Encourage fairs to use commercial member services
3. Encourage new commercial / associate membership

GOAL 5. Funding

Objectives:

1. Pursue sustainable funding for BC Fairs
2. Assist fairs and exhibitions in researching funding sources
3. Provide resources to fairs and exhibitions to prepare funding applications

GOAL 6. Administration

Objectives:

1. Promote BC Fairs (self-promotion)
2. Represent BC Fairs at CAFE and IAFE
3. Assist fairs and exhibitions with core activities
4. Plan / coordinate BC Fairs Convention and AGM
5. Act as liaison between all members
6. Review membership criteria

G. STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

For each goal and its objectives, a series of strategies and actions must be identified to answer the key question: *How do we get there?*

For BC Fairs, the following strategies and actions were developed:

GOAL 1. Education

Objective 1. Promote agricultural awareness

Strategies & Actions

- maintain liaison with Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- establish links to other agricultural organizations
 - e.g. BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation
- develop agricultural awareness information for use by member fairs
- appoint a Board or industry member to champion ag awareness
- use social media (Facebook, Twitter) to reach youth demographic

Objective 2. Serve as information central

Strategies & Actions

- develop inventory of resource material
- provide resources to member fairs and exhibitions
 - posters, signs, videos, etc.
 - order from BC Fairs website (restricted access)
- invite member fairs to contact BC Fairs for their information needs

Objective 3. Develop best practices

Strategies & Actions

- develop best practices for food safety for concessions
- distribute animal care guidelines for live exhibits
 - from BC Farm Animal Care Council (www.bcfacc.ca)
- develop guidelines for public safety and emergency response
- adopt Market Safe Guidelines when available (March 2010)

Objective 4. Update exhibit and judging guidelines

Strategies & Actions

- establish a Standards Committee for BC Fairs
- update the BC Fairs exhibit standards manual
- provide linkages to other recognized judging standards
 - livestock, dairy, 4-H, etc.

- develop proposals for short-term projects and apply for Small Project funding from government and corporate agencies

GOAL 2. Member Services

Objective 1. Improve communications

Strategies & Actions

- review and improve LiveWire
 - electronic distribution, wider reach, Board reports / updates
- expand BC Fairs website
 - solicit agri-business advertising links to generate revenue
- provide links to members' websites
- host members' websites on BC Fairs server
- add social media links (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to website

Objective 2. Revise / expand evaluation checklist

Strategies & Actions

- expand the Evaluation Committee for BC Fairs
- consult with evaluators and select member fairs to review and update evaluation process
- include evaluation of commercial members

Objective 3. Facilitate networking and mentoring

Strategies & Actions

- identify fairs that could benefit from and would accept mentoring
- offer an experienced mentor for the year following evaluation

Objective 4. Coordinate regional workshops

Strategies & Actions

- determine needs and opportunities by region through survey or round table topic at BC Fairs Convention
 - Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands
 - Lower Mainland
 - Southern Interior
 - North Central
- utilize video conferencing through Community Futures
- facilitate participation in IAFE Cyber Seminars
- apply for Small Project funding

GOAL 3. Relationship Building

Objective 1. Develop stronger relationships with key organizations

Strategies & Actions

- identify a Board member to champion relationship building
- prepare list of key organizations by priority
 - BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, Direct Farm Marketing Association, BC AgriTourism Alliance, others
- develop specific action plans to liaise with organizations

Objective 2. Encourage other agricultural fairs to become members

Strategies & Actions

- develop an outreach and incentive program for non-member fairs

Objective 3. Invite agricultural festivals to become members

Strategies & Actions

- identify community and regional festivals, e.g. Berry Festival
- develop an outreach and incentive program specific to festivals

GOAL 4. Commercial Members

Objective 1. Enhance relationships with commercial members

Strategies & Actions

- establish a working group to identify needs and opportunities for enhanced relationships
- prepare communications on benefits of commercial membership
- provide evaluation feedback to commercial members
- encourage communication between fairs and commercial members
- provide annual “BC Fairs Member” decals to commercial members in good standing

Objective 2. Encourage fairs to use commercial member services

Strategies & Actions

- communicate benefits of using commercial members to fairs
 - LiveWire articles, testimonials from fairs, etc.
 - workshop at BC Fairs Convention

Objective 3. Encourage new commercial / associate membership

Strategies & Actions

- review commercial members survey responses to identify needs and opportunities
- invite key individuals to develop an action plan for contacting potential commercial members

GOAL 5. Funding

Objective 1. Pursue sustainable funding for BC Fairs

Strategies & Actions

- establish a working group to research alternative funding models and potential funding sources
 - set up a Foundation to administer a trust fund
 - withdraw interest / investment income only
- request transition funding from Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- establish working relationship with Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
- pursue opportunities for funding from Direct Access Program
- identify potential advertisers and/or corporate sponsors
 - agri-business, supermarket chains, banks, etc.
- review BC Fairs membership fees and adjust as appropriate
- consider fee-for-service opportunities for select BC Fairs services to member fairs
- apply to government and corporate agencies to access matching funding for projects and eligible initiatives

Objective 2. Assist fairs and exhibitions in researching funding sources

Strategies & Actions

- prepare and distribute lists of potential funding sources
- hold regional workshops on funding opportunities
 - Community Futures Development Corporation, etc.

Objective 3. Provide resources to fairs and exhibitions to prepare funding applications

Strategies & Actions

- develop templates and guidelines to assist in funding applications
- direct fairs to potential funding sources

GOAL 6. Administration

Objective 1. Promote BC Fairs (self-promotion)

Strategies & Actions

- establish a promotions committee to develop action plan
- celebrate and publicize 100th Anniversary of BC Fairs
 - logo, banners, website, news releases, media events

Objective 2. Represent BC Fairs at CAFE and IAFE

Strategies & Actions

- encourage BC Fairs President (or alternate) as well as Executive Director to attend national and international meetings
- network with representatives of other provincial and state fair associations to obtain new ideas to share with BC fairs and exhibitions

Objective 3. Assist fairs and exhibitions with core activities

Strategies & Actions

- provide centralized administrative services for select services on a fee basis
 - forming society, governance, legal matters, financial reporting

Objective 4. Plan and coordinate BC Fairs Convention and AGM

Strategies & Actions

- strengthen Convention planning committee

Objective 5. Act as liaison between all members

Strategies & Actions

- facilitate exchange of information, networking, and dispute resolution between member fairs and/or commercial members

Objective 6. Review membership criteria

Strategies & Actions

- establish a Membership Committee to determine whether the number of agricultural categories is a barrier to membership
- amend membership criteria, as appropriate

H. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

For each goal and its objectives, expected outcomes should be identified to answer the key question: *How do we know when we've arrived?*

For BC Fairs, the following examples of expected outcomes were suggested:

GOAL 1. Education

Objective 1. Promote agricultural awareness

Expected Outcomes

- member fairs and the public attending fairs will have a better understanding and appreciation of the agriculture and food industry of the province

Objective 2. Serve as information central

Expected Outcomes

- information resources will be available from BC Fairs
- all member fairs and exhibitions will have access to the same information to educate the public about agriculture
- member fairs will view BC Fairs as an effective information source

Objective 3. Develop best practices

Expected Outcomes

- best practices guidelines / manual for food safety (food concessions) available and used by all member fairs
- best practices guidelines / manual for animal care (live exhibits) provided to all fairs

Objective 4. Update exhibit and judging guidelines

Expected Outcomes

- simplified and practical exhibit / judging standards provided

GOAL 2. Member Services

Objective 1. Improve communications

Expected Outcomes

- regular Ministry of Agriculture & Lands column in LiveWire
- links to member fairs and exhibitions provided on BC Fairs website

Objective 2. Revise / expand evaluation checklist

Expected Outcomes

- updated, practical evaluation checklist developed for use by evaluators

Objective 3. Facilitate networking and mentoring

Expected Outcomes

- improved fairs and exhibitions because of mentoring program

Objective 4. Coordinate regional workshops

Expected Outcomes

- regional workshops organized for networking opportunities allowing for sharing of information for the betterment of all regions

GOAL 3. Relationship Building

Objective 1. Develop stronger relationships with key organizations

Expected Outcomes

- strong linkages to other agricultural organizations
- participation of BC Fairs in other provincial associations

Objective 2. Encourage other agricultural fairs to become members

Expected Outcomes

- all agricultural fairs in the province will be members of BC Fairs

Objective 3. Invite agricultural festivals to become members

Expected Outcomes

- community and regional agricultural festivals will be members of BC Fairs

GOAL 4. Commercial Members

Objective 1. Enhance relationships with commercial members

Expected Outcomes

- more commercial members actively participating in BC Fairs
- commercial companies benefit from membership in BC Fairs

Objective 2. Encourage fairs to use commercial member services

Expected Outcomes

- commercial members are the service providers of choice for all member fairs

Objective 3. Encourage new commercial / associate membership

Expected Outcomes

- BC Fairs will have more commercial and associate members

GOAL 5. Funding

Objective 1. Pursue sustainable funding for BC Fairs

Expected Outcomes

- BC Fairs secures ongoing funding
- BC Fairs is a financially healthy organization

Objective 2. Assist fairs and exhibitions in researching funding sources

Expected Outcomes

- member fairs are assisted in sourcing funding

Objective 3. Provide resources to fairs and exhibitions to prepare funding applications

Expected Outcomes

- funding templates and guidelines are available from BC Fairs

GOAL 6. Administration

Objective 1. Promote BC Fairs (self-promotion)

Expected Outcomes

- BC Fairs is effectively promoted to all stakeholders

Objective 2. Represent BC Fairs at CAFE and IAFE

Expected Outcomes

- BC Fairs is consistently and effectively represented at CAFE and IAFE
- information is shared with member fairs and exhibitions

Objective 3. Assist fairs and exhibitions with core activities

Expected Outcomes

- member fairs are assisted with select core activities

Objective 4. Plan / coordinate BC Fairs Convention and AGM

Expected Outcomes

- a successful Convention and AGM are held each year with increasing attendance and representation from all member fairs and commercial members

Objective 5. Act as liaison between all members

Expected Outcomes

- BC Fairs acts as a liaison between members, as required
- communication and networking are facilitated
- disputes, if any, are resolved quickly and fairly

Objective 6. Review membership criteria

Expected Outcomes

- membership criteria are updated in harmony with current mission
- there are no barriers to prevent small agricultural fairs and festivals from joining BC Fairs



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