Yukon Agricultural Association

Presentation for Circumpolar Agricultural Conference
Sept 30 2013

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History

- Yukon has sustained First Nation populations for thousands of years.

Artifacts from an icepatch in traditional Carcross-Tagish, Champagne and Aishihik, Kluane, and Kwanlin Dün territory (Hare et al., 2004).
Agriculture: Past

- Hudson’s Bay Company

“Our potatoes which were coming on beautifully have been frozen to cinders last night by a hard frost...My endeavours to rise [sic] a crop of potatoes have been abortive. An unfortunate fatality has attended them at every turn for these three seasons.”

- Robert Campbell
Fort Selkirk, 25 June 1850
(Robinson, 2010)

Hudson’s Bay Company test plots at Frances Lake (1842-49), Pelly Banks (1845-49), Fort Selkirk (1848-52). (Tomkins, 2006)
Agriculture: Past

Gold!

- Discovered in Forty Mile in 1885
- Fear of scurvy drove miners and traders to start garden plots
- Learned to plant on the south side of river banks

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**Gold at Fortymile Creek**

Eighteen ninety-one was significant because gold was discovered in paying quantities on Miller Creek. In the ensuing stampede and the adjustments in claims which followed, the discoverer’s original discovery claim was relocated, despite his protests. Ironically, his new claim proved to be the richest on the creek, and the one which he was forced to vacate was one of the poorest. This was also the year that agriculture was first introduced to Forty Mile. Jack McQuesten used a plough, drawn by two moose (named Kate and Susan), to break up the land, but the animals soon broke down and were replaced by Native labourers, six of whom

Gates, 1994
Agriculture: Past

- More gold!
  - Klondike’s 1898 stampede
  - Dawson boomed: greenhouses, rooftop gardens and cattle droves all served to feed the population of 20,000.

A Klondike garden with cultivated rows of cabbage and greenhouse in background. July 1903. Yukon Archives. H. C. Barley Fonds, #4705
Agriculture: Past

- Population decline post gold rush but agricultural production continued to increase until about 1915
- Mechanization in the 1920s reduced use of horses
- Building of the Alaska Highway in 1942 changed Yukon’s transportation network
Agriculture: Past

- Development of the Pine Creek Substation (Haines Junction) in 1944 by the federal government's Experimental Farms Service.
- Concluded in 1956: local production was not profitable due to high transportation costs and small local market, but region could become self-sufficient if these problems were overcome.

Village of Haines Junction, YT, showing location of Pine Creek Experimental Farm, closed in 1970.
Formation of YAA

- The Yukon Livestock & Agricultural Association was registered under the Societies Act May 24th 1974

- Renamed the Yukon Agricultural Association in 1993
YAA: Past

What we have done:

- Ran the Six Carrot Farmers’ Market from 1985 – 1998

- Started the North of 60° Agriculture Conference and Banquet in 1987
YAA: Past

What we have done:

- First Circumpolar Agricultural Conference in 1992
- Klondike Harvest Fair 1994 – 2006
- Participation in trade fairs, parades & World Food Day

1st Circumpolar Agricultural Conference
September 28 - October 3, 1992
Whitehorse, Yukon

To all Yukon Farmers:

As the reality of hosting the 1st Circumpolar Agricultural Conference looms before us perhaps now is a good time to remind ourselves why we took on such a monumental task!

In 1988 the first North of 60 Conference was hosted by the Yukon Livestock and Agricultural Association. We had clearly defined long and short term goals which helped us to develop the program for these conferences. We wanted the industry to provide the direction for the development of northern agriculture and to do this we had to make communities, governments and scientific groups aware of our needs.

The First Circumpolar Agricultural Conference will be a culmination of these efforts! Delegations from governments, research & educational centres and from private industry will represent the nine Circumpolar Countries and bring the best information available to date on the state of Northern Agriculture.

The importance of our industry representation at such an event cannot be underestimated. This is your personal opportunity to be directly involved in determining the future of agriculture in the North. The place to be this fall is right here at home in the Yukon!
YAA: Past

What we have done:

- Administered the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) program funds in Yukon. CARD 1: 1994-99, CARD II: 1999-2004
- Resulted in approximately 50 agricultural projects:
  - field trials of berries & potatoes;
  - funding to train organic inspection officer & meat inspector;
  - guides/workshops on wild mushrooms, horse care & gardening;
  - education programs for grades 3/4 & career development for grades 11/12;
  - public service announcements promoting Yukon products;
  - support for 4H projects & Whitehorse Downtown Urban Garden.
YAA: Past

What we have done:

- Administered the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program from 2004-09
- Resulted in projects such as:
  - grazing lease policy review;
  - studies on soil mesofauna, successful legume culture, craft fibre mill and oilseed production;
  - research on establishment of alfalfa in grass-hay stands;
  - publication of a book on boreal herbs;
  - development of meat processing infrastructure working group, farm cooperative, and research foundation;
Agriculture: Present

- The definition of an agricultural operation was expanded in 1991 for YT & NWT to include:
  - herding wild animals (caribou, muskox, etc);
  - breeding sled dogs;
  - horse outfitting and rigging; and
  - harvesting indigenous plants and berries.

- Recent census data for Yukon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2001</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Farms Reported</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres Reported</td>
<td>26,308</td>
<td>25,020</td>
<td>29,318</td>
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<td>Gross Farm Receipts</td>
<td>$3,689,642</td>
<td>$4,080,385</td>
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http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2011/
YAA: Present

Association Objectives:

1. To foster and promote Yukon agriculture
2. To encourage research and development pertaining to agriculture
3. To support suitable Yukon agriculture policies
4. To help develop legislation and regulations which meet the needs of the industry
5. To lobby for the industry
6. To provide agricultural information to both Association members and the Yukon public
YAA: Present

Membership

Breakdown of 2012/13 YAA Membership
(142 total)

- Whitehorse
- Dawson
- Mayo
- Marsh Lake
- Haines Junction
- McCabe Creek
- Carcross
- Carmacks
- Faro
- Tagish
YAA: Present

Objective 1: foster and promote agriculture

- Rental equipment: 5 pieces of farm machinery (purchased between 2006 & 2009) and 2 event tents
YAA: Present

Objective 1: foster and promote agriculture

YAA: Present

Objective 1: foster and promote agriculture

- Yukon Young Farmers: Yukon chapter of Canadian Young Farmers’ Forum (CYFF) formed as a sub-committee of YAA April 6 2011.

- YYF activities include:
  - attendance at annual CYFF AGM & conference;
  - promotion of agriculture among young people;
  - education workshops for members & other interested farmers;
  - social & networking events.
Objective 2: Research & Development

- Regional industry council for Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP) is a subcommittee of YAA

- Projects funded include:
  - farm waste management;
  - agri-food system design & planning;
  - biochar research;
  - nutrient conversion - waste to feedstuff;
  - expansion potential for irrigated agriculture;
  - hydro-kinetic agricultural power;
  - microalgae feed program
Objective 2: Research & Development

- CAAP Project: hydro-kinetic agricultural power
YAA: Present

Objective 2: Research & Development

- CAAP Project: microalgae feed program
YAA: Present

Objective 2: Research & Development

- CAAP Project: increasing self-sufficiency in Yukon's agricultural sector through the use of biochar
YAA: Present

Objective 5: lobby for the industry:

- YAA presents viewpoints that broadly benefit the whole agricultural industry in Yukon

YAA reps sit on:
Agriculture Industry Advisory Council, Growing Forward 2’s Research Committee, National Project Advisory Committee (a federal agricultural program)
Objective 6: Provide info to members & public

- YAA website: www.yukonag.ca and blog (listing local available farm products listings)
- Quarterly newsletter The Ploughboy
- Speakers
- Membership update emails (events, opportunities, etc)
- Developing a lending library
Objective 6: Provide info to members & public

**YAA: Present**

**Objective 6: Provide info to members & public**

**Yukon Agricultural Association Speaker Series Presents:**

**Bryce Wrigley**

**Alaska Flour Company**

Bryce is from the family owned & operated Alaska Flour Company in Delta Junction AK, where 4 generations of Wrigleys work to increase food independence in Alaska.

Bryce will cover:
- Overview of agriculture in Alaska
- What market opportunities he followed
- What technologies he uses
- The possibility of using Yukon-grown grain
- What future industry prospects he anticipates

This talk will follow the Yukon Agriculture Branch’s presentation by Brad Jones (Program Specialist Eggs) from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on egg grading and the physical requirements for building an egg grading facility. Same location, 9am-noon.

**Yukon Agricultural Association Speaker Series Presents:**

**Haskap Berry Production with Carl Barber**

Carl Barber is from Northern Light Orchards in Birch Hills SK. He has been growing haskap berries since 2008 and has 10 acres in production for U-pick, retail and wholesale markets. Carl has experience from the small scale to the large scale and from production through to marketing.

The morning session will be followed by several farm visits in the afternoon. Please contact us if you would like Carl and workshop attendees to visit your farm and we will arrange the tour!

admin@yukonag.ca or (867) 668-6884
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Soils

http://web.unbc.ca/~sanbom/yukon.html
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Climate

Photo: M. Schneider, 2013
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Transport costs
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Small markets
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Cheap food from ‘outside’
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Labour shortages

Photo: T. Zakus, 2013
Agriculture: Future

Challenges to development:

- Regulations, lack of infrastructure/storage facilities
YAA: Future

Opportunities for development:

- August 1, 2012: YAA Signed land lease with Yukon Government for a 64ha parcel
YAA: Future

Opportunities for development:

- Land lease
YAA: Future
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- Land lease

Photos: S. Gibson, 2013
YAA: Future
Opportunities for development:
- Niche markets
YAA: Future

Opportunities for development:

- Networking & resource sharing:
  - YAA working with territorial government to support policy development
  - Work with the Agriculture Branch to respond government legislation and regulations to insure best fit to industry
YAA: Future

Opportunities for development:

- Networking & resource sharing:
  - Food System Design & Planning Project through CAAP funds; research led by Kwantlen Polytechnic University’s Dr. Kent Mullinex
Thank You & Questions?

The YAA can be reached at:

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W: www.yukonag.ca
References

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