

FROLEK CATTLE CO. LTD.

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November, 2013 - Water Sustainability Act

Our family ranch has operated in the area south of Kamloops for over 100 years with fourth generation family active in the operation. We are concerned that proposed changes to the Water Act could potentially jeopardize the sustainability of ranching operations in the Interior of BC by reducing crop production and negatively impacting livestock operations. It is concerning that only a short time-frame is allowed for final comments to this important legislation when family farm businesses are extremely busy with their farming and livestock activities with little time to make their presentations. However, we will address our main concerns.

- Water currently allocated to agriculture must remain linked to agriculture and lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve. The security of food production must be retained by the continuation of the First In Time, First In Right model of licensing.
- Agriculture and local food production must be given a high priority over other users, at rates where the resulting food production is economically viable and sustainable into the future.
- Stream flow is a main objective in the proposed changes. A balanced management plan through investment in additional water storage infrastructure with controlled release of stored water would address many issues; namely, flood control, stream erosion, protection of fish habitat, and security of irrigation water.
- The value of existing rancher-built water storage infrastructure with the supplementary societal benefits provided for fish habitat and recreational activities should be recognized with a provision for maintenance funding.
- Encourage water conservation through incentives and funding for the implementation of new technology, irrigation upgrades and water development.
- Recognition of unrecorded historic in-stream livestock watering on both private and Crown range lands is mandatory. Provision for off-stream livestock watering should be allowed without having to transfer a volume from an irrigation licence.
- With limited livestock watering resources on Interior private and Crown lands, it is imperative that livestock have access to available water sources.

Food production has become a very important global priority so government and the public have an obligation to promote and assist in maintaining a viable agriculture industry in the province of BC.

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