



North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association

Farming Agriculture Rural Marketing Eco-Diversification
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NEWS RELEASE – North Cariboo

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FARMED takes successful North Cariboo Product Guide online with AgriConnect

The North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association dba FARMED and the "**Opportunities 2022 & Beyond Committee**" are pleased to announce that the web-based interactive platform that will Connect Consumers and Producers is now online. **Agri-Connect** as it is known went live on June 24, 2023 and FARMED celebrated through a Soft Launch at the Quesnel Farmers' Market. Go to <https://www.farmed.ca/agriconnect>

The completion of AgriConnect began with a vision following FARMED hosting a survey requesting input from members and the community as to what would be of value that fits within the mandates of FARMED. An item given top priority was the development of an online tool that would support producers, connect producers with consumers, and ultimately take FARMED's successful Farm Product Guide online! Twenty-four months later and following countless hours of volunteer time brainstorming, grant writing, preparing presentations for potential partners, and much dedication and perseverance, FARMED is excited to invite the community to visit **AgriConnect!** AgriConnect is a living site. Additional content will be added on an ongoing basis to ensure it remains current and relevant. One goal is for the site to be a valuable resource that the greater North Cariboo community will use. FARMED will be further developing the site by adding information to the "Agriculture Resources" page along with incorporating Stories and Videography into the site. FARMED is also working to incorporate information pertaining to indigenous plants that are traditionally and /or culturally significant to the First Nation communities within the North Cariboo. Another benefit of this site is that producers and non-profits who sign up for a listing, whether it is basic or extended, can update their listings as needed. FARMED is also hoping to expand the non-profit section to ensure it is as comprehensive as possible.

Agri-Connect is just one of several components of the “Opportunities 2022 & Beyond” Project. Other parts of the project include FARMED hosting a Round Table that will support the development of linkages across the geographic area from Clinton to Fort St. James / Fraser Lake with a focus on food security and the refurbishment of the “North Cariboo - Grown for You” 12’ x 16’ billboard signage along Hwy. 97 north and south of Quesnel. FARMED will also be hosting a Celebratory Event on September 1, 2023 as an official launch of AgriConnect along with 3 workshops and 2 tours under the **Knowledge and Technology Transfer Program** (Ministry of Agriculture) that will focus on the following: Market Garden Root Cellar / Cold Storage Tour; Wildfire Resilience for Agriculture Producers Tour; Vending at BC Farmers Markets; Adding Value to your Produce through Processing and Preservation; and Farm to Consumer - Rules for Compliant Production.

Since initiating the “Opportunities 2022 & Beyond” Project, membership with FARMED has increased by over 165%. Membership is now at 41 members with the majority of them regionally based agriculture producers (farms and ranches). This is a true indicator of the value of the project.

The success of “Opportunities 2022 & Beyond” and the development of AgriConnect is based upon not only a vision but the dedication of a core group of volunteers who have met not only every 2 weeks but often more frequently to keep the project on track. The value of these people’s in-kind contribution is immeasurable. FARMED is also very thankful for our partners and funders who also saw the value in the project. This includes [Integris Credit Union](#), [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#), [Cariboo Regional District](#) (North Cariboo Economic Development), [Community Futures North Cariboo](#), Quesnel Community Foundation and most recently, Ministry of Agriculture. FARMED also appreciates the expertise and contribution made by Q’est Management Consulting for their support with AgriConnect and ABC Weblink for developing the AgriConnect web portal.

Greg Lawrence, General Manager of Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Cariboo states *“We are proud to support the ongoing growth and development of the agricultural sector in the North Cariboo through grant funding and community partnerships with organizations such as FARMED. We endeavour to strengthen local farming operations and other agri-businesses by offering business loans, coaching, consulting, and workshops. Community Futures North Cariboo is also pleased to sponsor the Agricultural Resources webpage for FARMED in order to connect local producers to resources that can help them grow. For more information about our products and services visit www.cfquesnel.com”*.

Heloise Dixon-Warren, Chair of FARMED and the Opportunities 2022 & Beyond Project states “As a long time member of FARMED, it is exciting to be involved with an organisation that has such dedication, is innovative and supportive with members that have such amazing skill sets. The success of the Opportunities 2022 & Beyond Project is an indicator of the value of the project to the greater North Cariboo community”.

FARMED was established in 2006/07 and is a grass roots, industry-led non-profit organisation. Today FARMED is one of the driving forces in the North Cariboo for the promotion of agriculture and agriculture-related business and marketing opportunities. FARMED is project oriented and has successfully undertaken many projects including the North Cariboo Agriculture Awareness and Marketing Project, sponsoring several Ag & Hort Leap Conferences, Art on the Farm, festivals and tours, as well as supporting the establishment of the Cariboo Regional District Agriculture Development Advisory Committee (ADAC) and the Sprout Kitchen Food Hub. For more information about the Opportunities 2022 and Beyond Project email farmed2007@gmail.com or to contact the FARMED Board of Director, please email info@farmed.ca

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