

## **2. (a) Agricultural Areas**

Agriculture is an important aspect of the Comox Valley's economic and cultural landscape and should be protected and enhanced. *Agricultural Areas* have been established using the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) boundaries. ALR lands within *Municipal Areas* are shown with a hatched shade and included within the land use designation of *Agricultural Areas* to recognize their function as working landscapes. *Agricultural Areas* cover approximately 12 percent of the Comox Valley, but only slightly more than 50 percent of the lands are currently in agricultural production, which leaves the potential for significant expansion of agricultural activities.

With regards to growth management, it is the intent of the RGS to reinforce the policies and procedures within the ALR in order to support agricultural practices.

### **MG Policy 2B-1 – Agricultural Areas**

Official community plans shall contain policies for Agricultural Areas that are consistent with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and regulations established under the Act, including the establishment of adequate buffers that ensure abutting farm and non-farm uses do not conflict and that non-farm uses do not impede agricultural activity within the ALR.

### **MG Policy 2B-2 – Re-designation of Agricultural Areas**

In the event that lands are removed from the ALR by the Agricultural Land Commission, the *Agricultural Areas* designation in the RGS shall still remain. In such cases, a redesignation of such lands will require a minor amendment to this RGS, as detailed in Part 5, in order to establish an appropriate new land-use designation.

### **MG Policy 2B-3 – Environmental Protection within Agricultural Areas**

Policies regarding environmental protection must be applied with careful consideration in *Agricultural Areas*. New environmental regulations should require further consultation and collaborative planning with the agricultural community and local governments. In particular, any new policies respecting the Regional Conservation Framework set out in this RGS must recognize the environmental, social and economic benefits provided by a strong local agricultural industry in the Comox Valley. In particular, the participation of private landowners in *Agricultural Areas* within biodiversity corridors should be on a voluntary basis.

#### **Excerpt**

Schedule 'A' Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010 – Agricultural Areas