

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

### 8.1 PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of the Agricultural Viability Strategy is not to determine if the agricultural resource and ALR land should be farmed, but how they can be better farmed and managed.

Richmond's Agricultural Land Reserve is a finite, unique, valuable and under-utilized resource.

### 8.2 WHAT THE PROFILE TELLS US

#### Quality Resources

- Richmond's agricultural soils are quite good, and even the "worst" soils are good for individual crops like cranberries and blueberries.
- If the soils are enhanced with drainage and other improvements, then all of the agricultural lands become classified as "prime" soils, or soils that are good for a wide range of crops, with only minimal limitations.
- Some areas within Richmond's ALR have different agricultural capabilities and potential.

#### Diverse Produce

- Cranberries, hay, blueberries and potatoes have the most land devoted to production.
- Richmond farms produce:
  - Many crops, including cranberries, blueberries, potatoes and forage;
  - Vegetables, including pumpkins, squash, cabbage, sweet corn, cucumbers, green peas;
  - Various tree fruits;
  - Hens and chickens, beef and dairy cattle, sheep and lambs;
  - Exotic species like llamas and alpacas;
  - Diversified agricultural products such as honey, flowers and Christmas trees.

#### Profitability

- While profits fluctuate, on average, farms in Richmond earn very high revenues compared to the rest of the Province.
- In 1995, Richmond's 247 farms earned over \$56 million in revenues, for an average of over \$228,000 per farm.
- Together, these 247 farms earned over \$9 million in profits in 1995.
- Cranberry farms earned the majority of the agricultural profits in Richmond.

#### Viability: From Threats and Weaknesses to Strengths and Opportunities

- Richmond's ALR has tremendous potential.
- Agricultural constraints can be removed.
- Opportunities have yet to be achieved.
- The current management approach emphasizes "Resource Protection".
- The future management approach can emphasize: "Increased Viability".

### 8.3 CHOICES FOR THE FUTURE

In managing ALR land, two options are possible:

#### Option 1: Managing for Increased Viability

This option involves establishing:

- An ongoing statistical and mapping database program;
- A clearer agricultural vision;
- Resource management nodes in the ALR;
- Comprehensive plans:

**Land Use**

- For resource management issues.
- To strengthen farming and agriculture uses.
- For identifying diversification opportunities.
- For minimizing non-farm uses and their impacts.
- For urban and farm buffers.

**Servicing**

- Water.
- Sanitary sewer.
- Drainage.
- Flood management.
- Road access.
- Environmental Management.
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).
- Best practices.

**Nuisance Management**

- A Communications Strategy to achieve improved awareness, understanding, opportunities and problem solving.
- Partnership plans to maximize government, private and community efforts.

**Option 2: Status Quo - Managing for Protection**

This option involves continuing to manage the ALR with an emphasis on resource protection, with partial plans and co-ordination.

**8.4 SUMMARY**

Option 1 appears best as it enables constraints to be removed, opportunities to be achieved, uncertainty to be minimized and increased agricultural viability to occur.