

Report on Klondike Agriculture Production and Development Potential

July 2025

Klondike Development Organization
In Association with Klondike Farmers Forum

Box 1613
Dawson City, YT

Y0B1G0

867-993-4431

klondikedevlopment@gmail.com

klondikedevlopment.com

1. SUMMARY	2
1.1 Data collection, presentation and sharing	2
2. ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPANTS	3
2.1 Survey	3
2.2 Interviews, consultation and discussions	4
2.3 Meeting of Farmers	4
2.4 Asset Mapping Exercise at Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm	4
3. LEARNING	5
3.1 Highlights from the Survey	5
3.2 Overview of Production and Market Demand in the Klondike Region	6
3.3 Market Trends	10
3.4 Sales	12
3.5 Suggestions for Supporting Increased Agricultural Production	15
3.6 What's in the works to develop agriculture in the Klondike?	19
APPENDIX 1- SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS	21
A1.1 Farming in the Klondike Survey Results	21
A1.2 Klondike Farmers Forum Meeting Summary	21
A1.3 Agriculture Asset Mapping	22

1. SUMMARY

Klondike Development Organization (KDO) and Klondike Farmers Forum (KFF, an unofficial group of local farmers which began as a sub-committee of Yukon Agricultural Society), partnered to investigate the current agricultural production situation in the Klondike region, to identify practical ways to support local farming, and to engage in planning for development of an agricultural hub in Dawson City that might include collective ownership of agricultural infrastructure to benefit the sector.

1.1 Data collection, presentation and sharing

The following activities were undertaken:

Data collection

- Online survey to collect information including current and planned production, infrastructure gaps, governance models, etc.
- Interviews with farmers, including Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm
- Interviews with Yukon Agriculture Department representatives re: plans and supports
- Focused meeting with members of Klondike Farmers Forum to review and understand initial survey/interview results (Feb 6, 2025)
- Asset mapping consultation with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm representatives (Mar 19, 2025)

Data presentation and sharing

- Collated survey results into a PowerPoint and shareable pdf slideshow
- Shared a digital (pdf) summary of survey results with farmers, industry, and agriculture department of Yukon via email: February 1 (farmers), February 13 (government).
- Held a meeting with Klondike Farmers on February 6 at Yukon University to review PowerPoint presentation of survey results and discuss findings and farmers' current situations with a goal of determining directions and steps based on data.
- Survey results posted on klondikedevlopment.com and shared on Facebook
- Asset Mapping results collated and shared with TH Farm and KFF, included in final report.

Written report

- Shared directly with KFF (now transitioned to Central Yukon Agriculture Network, Yukon Government, City of Dawson, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm. Posted on KDO website, with link shared via social media.

2. ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPANTS

2.1 Survey

30 farmers and/or agri-producers completed our survey 'Farming in the Klondike' between November and December 2024. The survey was open to all scales of production and activity.

13 respondents were 'backyard farmers' producing food for their families

10 respondents identified as 'full or part time farming businesses'

5 identified as 'side-gig' farmers

2 identified as 'agri-producers'

Trends and insights from the survey are included in the summary provided in Section 3. A full results summary is available on the KDO website: <https://www.klondikedevlopment.com/research/>

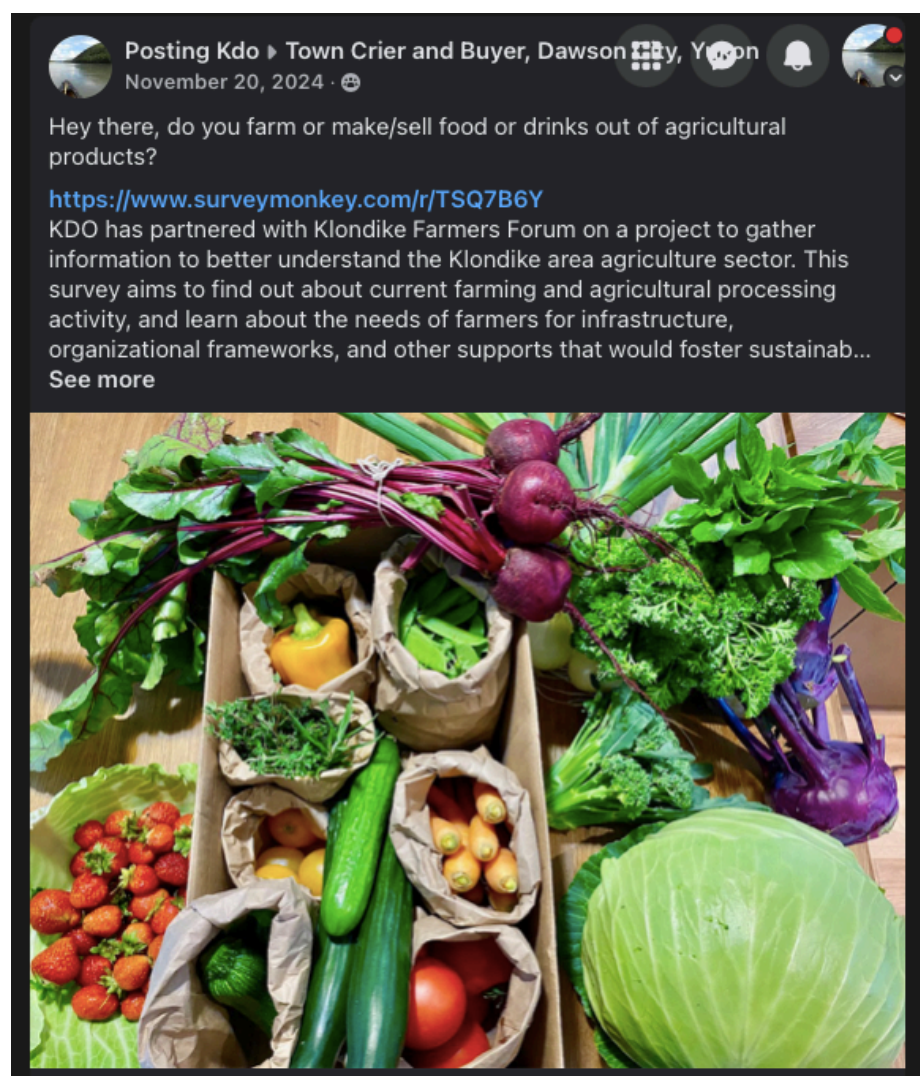


Figure 1: Sample survey notice

The survey was promoted via social media, posters on local notice boards and by direct email to farmers through the Klondike Farmers Forum network.

2.2 Interviews, consultation and discussions

Multiple discussions and emails took place between KDO's Evelyn Pollock and Yukon Government Dept. of Agriculture, including Kirk Price, Jonathan Lucas and Bastien Ipas.

Megan Waterman was the lead voice and organizer representing the Klondike Farmers Forum. Megan provided input developing the survey questions, facilitated communications with farmers, participated in planning, and consultation with TH Farm and Yukon Agriculture Department.

Multiple short chats took place with farmers and others associated with the agriculture sector in the Klondike.

2.3 Meeting of Farmers

14 farmers attended a meeting of the Klondike Farmers Forum on February 6, 2025 to review survey results and have discussions. A summary of meeting content and outcomes is provided in Appendix 1.2.

2.4 Asset Mapping Exercise at Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm

KDO engaged with TH Farm first via a telephone interview with Derrick Hastings, then via an in-person session at the Farm to conduct an asset mapping exercise. Mapping participants were two long-serving year-round farm employees: Derrick Hastings (Farm Manager), Jonathan Robinson (Farm Administrator), plus Megan Waterman participated for KFF (report of this exercise in Appendix 1.3).

3. LEARNING

3.1 Highlights from the Survey

Agricultural production in the Klondike area is well supported by residents, tourists and local businesses and **there is room for more local agricultural product in our local and regional market.** (0% of growers said demand for their products was less than they produce, and 67% say the demand is bigger than what they produce).

60% of survey respondents are intending to keep up their activity for 11 or more years.
About half of surveyed farmers plan to increase their production over the next 3 years.

Backyard farming, side-gigs and part-time production are contributing significantly to overall food production in the area. A wide array of products (veggies, fruits, meats, bedding plants, value-added products, wild harvest and more) are sold into the local and Yukon market.

Farmers selling product in the Klondike region face numerous challenges, with the top being:

- 1- Cost of shipping or shipping logistics
- 2- Inability to produce enough to meet demand
- 3- Cost of inputs and access to capital (tied)

Processing and production phases are deemed to need the most support from Governments or Agriculture Associations.

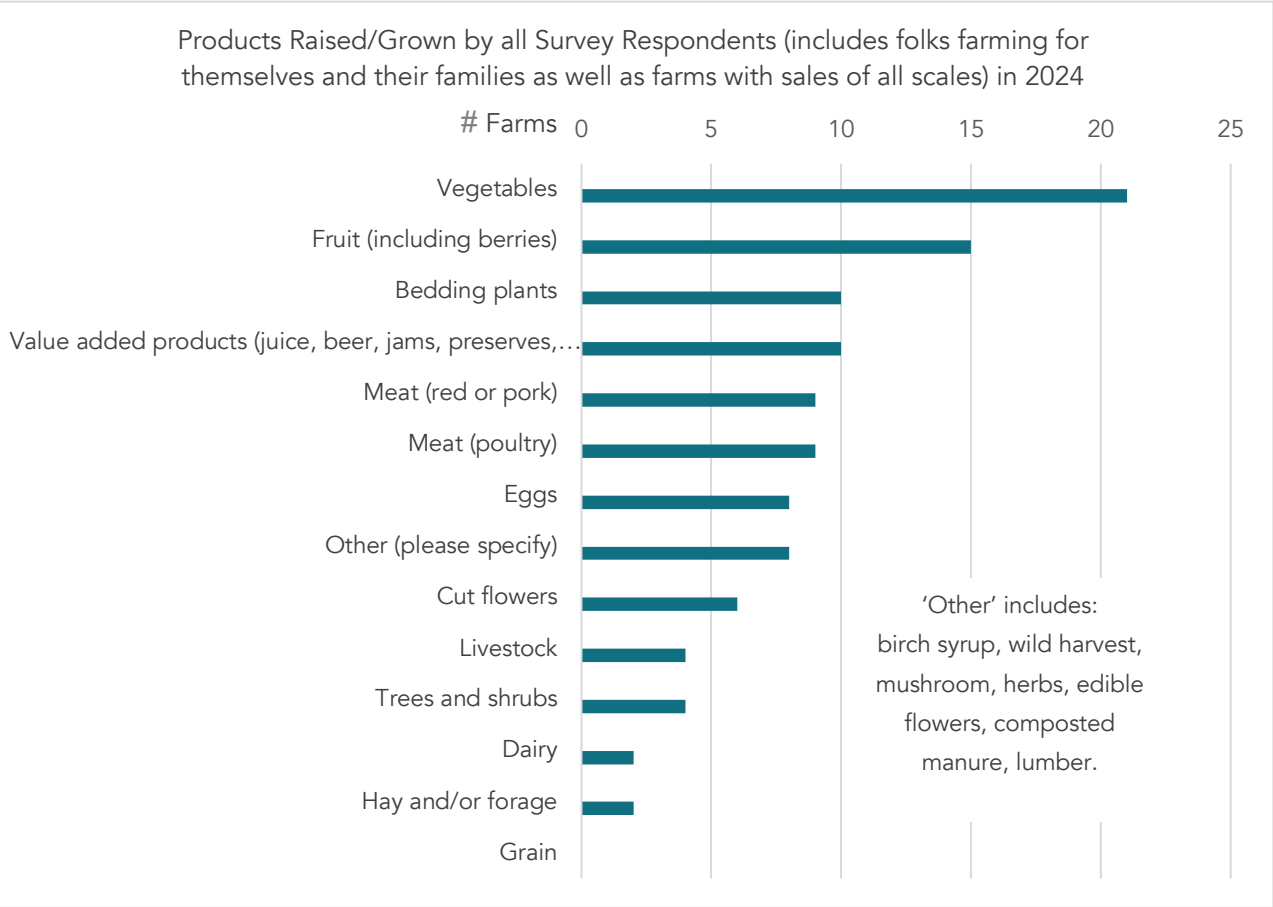
The full Agriculture in the Klondike 2024 Survey Results Presentation is available as a separate document at: <https://www.klondikedevlopment.com/research/>

3.2 Overview of Production and Market Demand in the Klondike Region

Farms and Products Overview

Klondike farming is diverse, making a wide array of locally grown/raised food and other products available in the community.

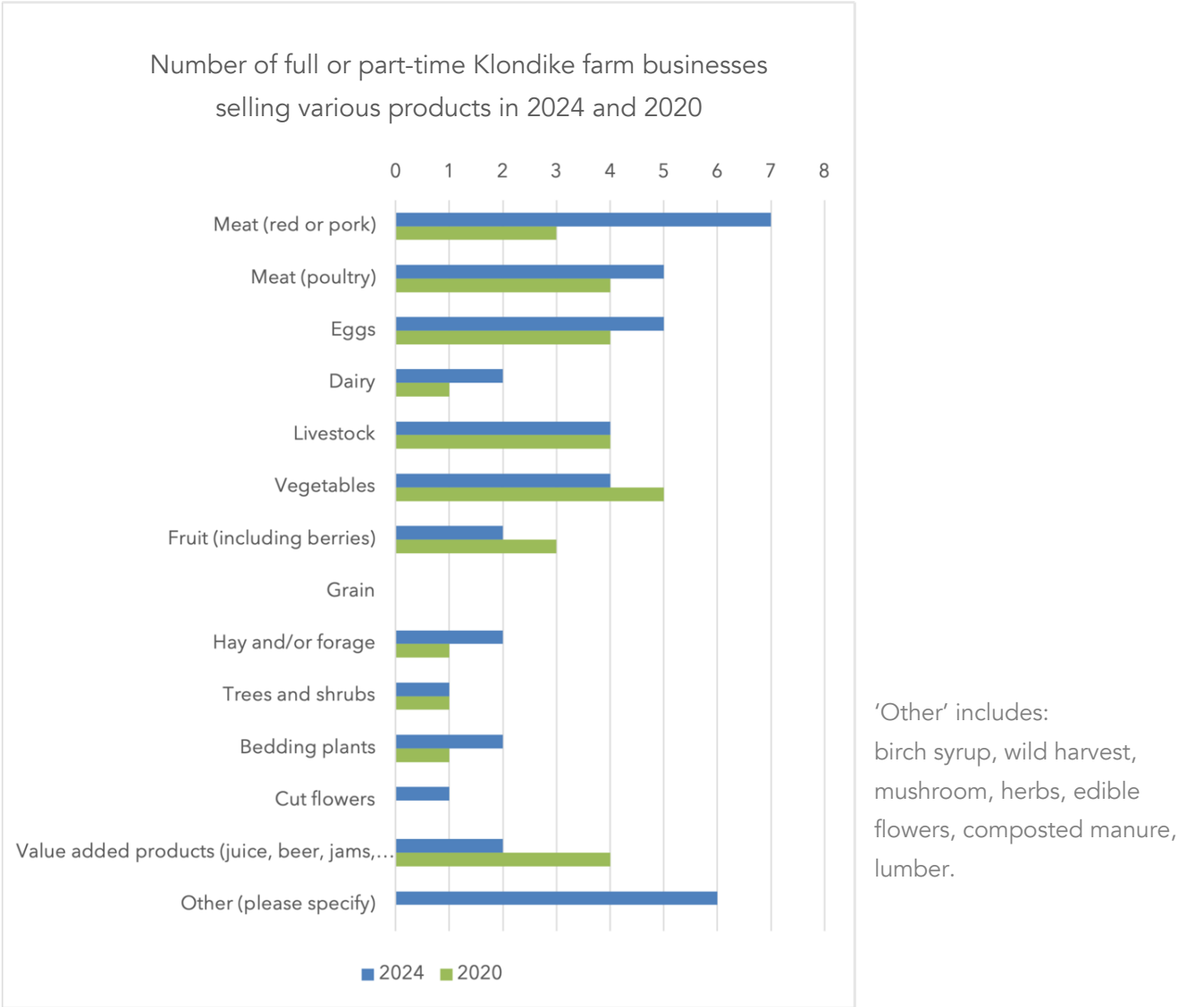
Figure 1: What Klondike area farmers are growing or raising (includes full and part-time farming businesses, plus side-gig and subsistence farming), 2024.



Vegetables (and herbs) are farmed by 75% of respondents to the 2024 Survey. Following vegetables, the most common crop is fruit & berries (52%), then bedding plants and value-added products like jams, teas, pickles, salves, etc. (35% each). While the above numbers include those who are not selling their produce, the 4 most commonly produced categories are broadly consistent with the products available at the average summer Farmers Market on Front Street in Dawson.

Since individuals and families who are farming primarily for their own consumption need not concern themselves with broader markets or demand, the following discussion refers to farms engaged in commercial sales. Backyard farmers are contributing to the regional food supply and food security, however in this market demand section we will focus on commercial agriculture.

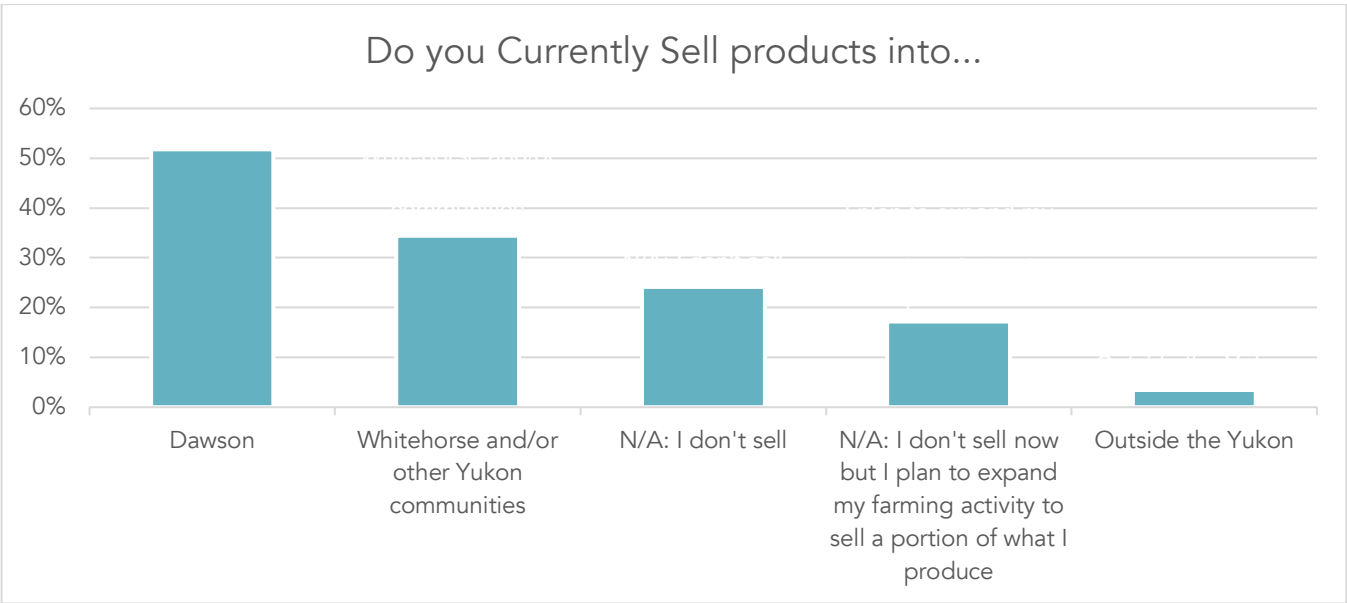
Figure 2: Comparison of the number of reported full time and part-time agricultural businesses producing various items (does not include side-gig or subsistence farming). (KDO/KFF surveys 2024 and 2020).



The number of farms engaged in part-time or full-time commercial activity has increased marginally in most product categories, but we note that change is a constant in our regional agricultural environment. In the last few years, two of Dawson’s larger commercial farm operations closed, with

one re-opening briefly before getting hit by a flood, and another being dormant for a few years until purchased this past winter with market sales commencing this summer. At least two other farms have dramatically shifted their focus, scale and/or products. In a small market, an individual farm’s pivot in response to weather events, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure or other challenges have immediate impacts on the local/regional supply and availability of products. But the region is also seeing new farmers entering into business, and/or ramping up their operations. Products such as mushrooms and sprouts have been added to local menus recently, and one farm is making steps toward raising beef. In 2024’s survey, five backyard or subsistence farmers indicated that they plan to expand production to enable selling a portion of what they produce.

Figure 3. Supplying which markets?



Demand

Most Klondike farmers who are selling their products reported demand levels exceeding what they can supply in both the 2024 and 2020 surveys. Not a single farmer reported demand being less than the quantity they produced.

15 out of 17 survey respondents engaged in sales indicated that they believe there is a market for their products outside their current market. While there appears room for expansion, farmers are managing their production and financial or labour inputs against market demand and seasonal sales opportunities very closely.

Barriers identified by Klondike area farmers to expansion of their market include:

- Lack of access to processing facilities (particularly inspected slaughter)
- Consistency and scale of production
- Cost of building infrastructure or purchasing equipment
- Time and labour resources
- Limited land

Taking vegetables as an example, whereas there is year-round demand, indoor growing systems have not emerged locally in a large way, (although there are a couple of entrepreneurs producing indoor product such as sprouts and mushrooms for niche clientele). Farms growing outdoors of course have a limited season, and then some face challenges with storage and preservation or reaching buyers after the autumn. As a result, most farmers limit their production to what can be sold before the end of September or October. Other farms with effective cold storage setups are in a position to grow larger quantities of storage-friendly items such as kale, cabbage, potatoes, carrots and other root veggies because they can store them for sales throughout the winter.

In general, Yukon farmers are capturing a relatively small portion of the potential market for their products. A 2024 report prepared for Yukon’s Agriculture Branch provides data for the Yukon as a whole. Data is not available to calculate the Klondike’s portion of that market share.

Table 1. Estimated annual market share captured by Yukon producers for a selection of vegetables

Beets	26.3 to 66.2%
Carrots	11.8 to 49.5%
Kale	15.2 to 33.7%
Cabbage	6.3 – 25.5 %
Tomatoes	16.6 – 23.2 %
Cucumbers	16.7 – 19.7 %
Potatoes	8.6 – 16.1 %

(Yukon Agriculture Branch: Multi-Year Development Options for Yukon Agriculture, 2024)¹

¹ Gov. of Yukon, Agriculture Branch (2024). Multi-Year Development Options for Yukon Agriculture, 2024. Upland Agricultural Consulting and Kermode Consulting.

Table 2: Percentage of Yukon Market Held by Yukon Meat Producers in 2022

Pork	5.7 to 6.3%
Beef	5.4 to 5.9%
Goat, sheep and lamb	Less than 1%

(Yukon Agriculture Branch: Multi-Year Development Options for Yukon Agriculture, 2024)

Although not every consumer will prioritize local products, the current market share of local meat and (to a lesser extent) vegetables is very small, suggesting ample room to expand the supply of Klondike and Yukon products into the local and regional markets.

3.3 Market Trends

There are several consumer trends that benefit farmers selling locally and regionally. The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (2024)² identifies four trends expected to influence consumers' food choices over the medium-term, i.e., roughly the next 10 years. Canadians are concerned about:

- 1- **Impact of food systems on the environment**
- 2- **Impact of diet on health and well-being**
- 3- **Food affordability** (recent inflation in food prices have made this a more acute concern)
- 4- **Social sustainability** of the food system. Unlike the other three trends, this is an emerging trend that has yet to have a major impact on the Canadian marketplace

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's 2023 research³ into consumer perceptions of sustainability food assurance systems found that:

- Overall, most participants trust in Canada's food system, which largely extends to producing foods sustainably

² Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (March 2024). Deep Dive #1: Trends in Canadian Consumer Demand for Environmental Attributes in Food.

³ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2023). 2022-23 Qualitative Research on Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability-Oriented Food Assurance Systems. Earnscliffe Strategy Group

- Trust in producers is often tied to how “corporate” participants feel the producer is. The smaller the producer, the more trustworthy they are assumed to be

National trends and consumer trust in small and local farms to provide sustainable, healthy food seem relevant in the Dawson context. Support for local farming has been noted at least as far back as 2011 when Conservation Klondike Society commissioned a Dawson Community Food Survey⁴ (with 141 households participating). At that time,

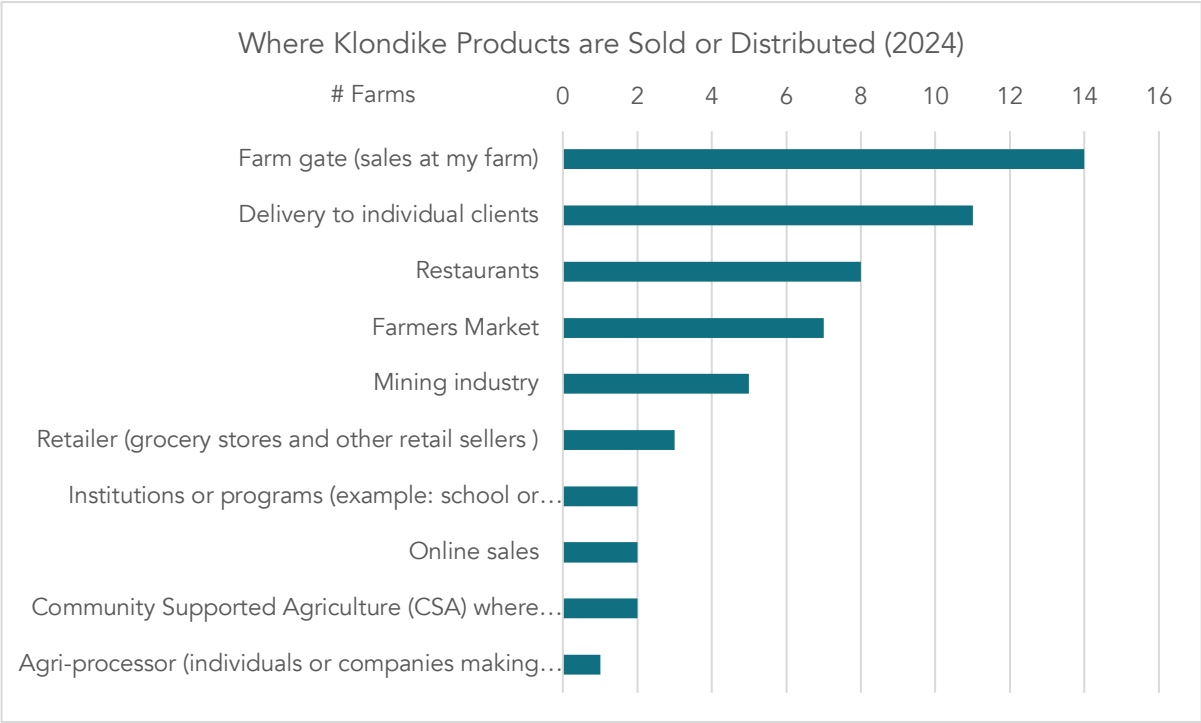
- 82% of households were concerned about long-term access to affordable and nutritious food,
- ‘Local’ was ranked as a ‘strong’ factor affecting purchase choice, and
- On average, respondents indicated a willingness to pay a price premium of about 15% for locally grown/raised food.

While any purchase decision weighs price and multiple other factors, Klondike area farmers have good market positioning based on current consumer values around making healthy, sustainable choices that benefit their local farms and community.

⁴ Conservation Klondike Society (2011). Dawson Community Food Survey. Across the River Consulting.

3.4 Sales

Figure 4. Customers of Klondike Farm Businesses (KDO/KFF Survey 2024)



A very high percentage (93%) of farmers are selling products directly from their farm (farm-gate), compared to 53% at restaurants, 50% at the farmers market and only 20% selling to grocery stores. Most farms sell in multiple places, but when asked which one client type makes up most of their sales; farm gate, individual client delivery and restaurants were each ranked top client by 30% of surveyed farm businesses.

Various factors such as price point, supply regularity, and inspections requirements limit sales to retailers. Farmers are able to get the best price for their products through farm-gate or client delivery sales. Bulk sales carry with them an expectation of discount, and for retail/grocery store sales, a wholesale price to accommodate retail markup.

While restaurants in the summer high season are especially well positioned to take up the July to September bloom of locally grown produce, grocery stores although willing, sometimes struggle to accommodate the more ad-hoc availability of local items in their space and seek consistency of supply throughout the year. A notable example of success in serving the year-round retail market however is Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Farm in supplying eggs to Dawson grocery stores: they are meeting the regulatory requirements and achieving a degree of supply consistency to make this possible. Larger commercial

farms like the Whitehorse-based Yukon Grain Farm are carving out space in retail outlets across the Yukon for potatoes and carrots due to their year-round product quality and supply. Based on market interest, there are opportunities for growth across multiple categories of agricultural product, however most of the Klondike area's farmers are maintaining businesses at a smaller scale that fits the community and their individual lifestyle choices. That said, certain production areas such as inspected meats are being held back by lack of infrastructure or other factors.

We don't have any meat market/consumption data for the central Yukon region, however reports from both farmers and restaurants indicate the market has room for more locally raised meat. The following table lists numbers of animals processed in inspected slaughter facilities, providing regional and community-specific baseline information.

Table 3: Inspected animal processing for Central Yukon 2018 to 2024

Year	Number of animals per community per abattoir				Total for central Yukon region
	Dawson animals in Mobile Abattoir	Mayo/Pelly animals in Mobile Abattoir	Dawson animals in Whitehorse Stationary Abattoir	Mayo/Pelly animals in Whitehorse Stationary Abattoir	
2018	13	4	?	?	17
2019	40	5	0	0	45
2020	59	0	18	25	102
2021	52	33	14	0	99
2022	72	4	0	0	76
2023	0	0	12	18	30
2024	31	0	0	0	31

(Information provided by Yukon Government, Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture Branch)

(Note that Dawson's red meat slaughter is almost exclusively pork)

In 2019 65 pigs were reported raised in Dawson (2020 survey), but only 40 were processed in an inspected facility.

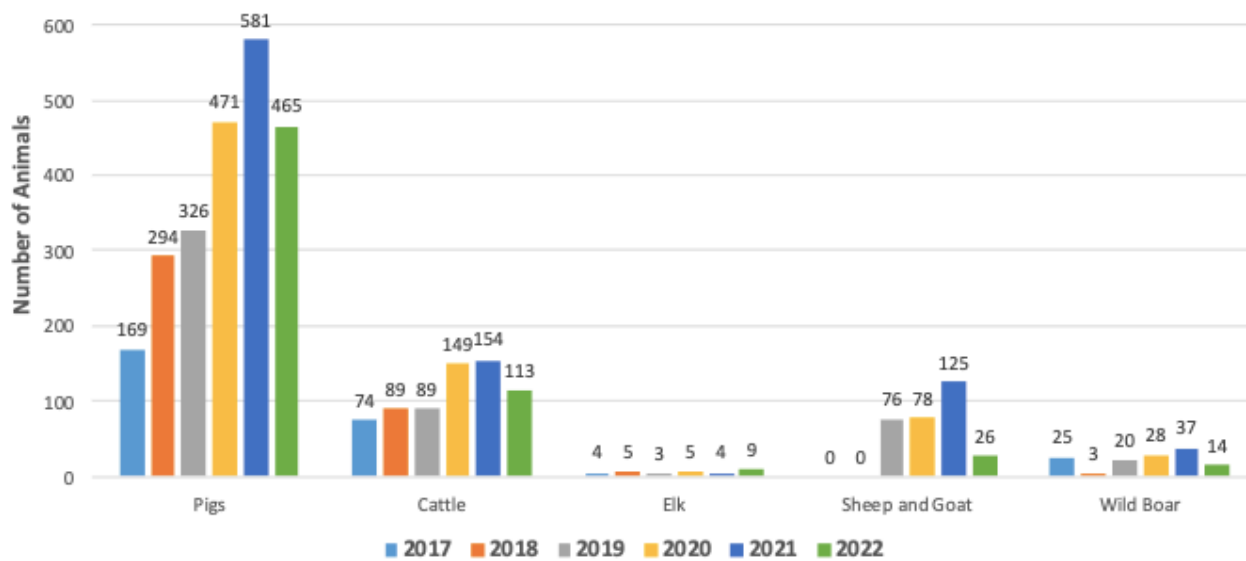
In 2024 69 pigs were reported raised in Dawson, of which only 31 were processed in an inspected facility.

Uninspected/farm gate sales make up the difference.

In 2021, Central Yukon (Dawson, Mayo, Pelly areas) produced more than 1/5 of all Yukon's inspected pork (see figure 5 below). The peak of Dawson red meat production though was 2022 (72 animals).

Subsequent years saw a dramatic drop-off, that according to local producers was due to uncertain or limited access to abattoir facilities. The fluctuating numbers reveal infrastructure instability which the Klondike/North Yukon must address in order to build a foundation for growth.

Figure 5: Number of animals slaughtered under inspection in Yukon from 2017-2022⁵



Very few cattle are being raised in the Klondike currently for either meat or dairy (respondents to KDO surveys reported 3 cows for 2024, 8 for 2019). There is interest from consumers in locally-raised beef, so there is potential for a business to fill this gap, however the Klondike’s extreme winters, limited pasture-suitable land and added distance from markets selling feed (increasing freight costs) pose challenges even greater than those experienced by farmers in the Whitehorse area.

⁵ Gov. of Yukon, Agriculture Branch (2024). Multi-Year Development Options for Yukon Agriculture, 2024. Upland Agricultural Consulting and Kermode Consulting.

Since there is demand...
what is needed to increase agricultural production in the Klondike?

3.5 Suggestions for Supporting Increased Agricultural Production

Meat

It turns out that the infrastructure required to enable expansion of local meat production is not enormous and is within reach of the community.

The majority of red meat production in the Klondike (as in the rest of the Yukon) is pork, due to their suitability for the local land resources and market interest. There are two Dawson area farms currently raising pork for sale to the 'inspected' market, and they both indicate all that is needed to enable increased production and sales into restaurants and shops is:

- 1- Reliable access to an abattoir and inspected meat slaughter/butchery services
- 2- Inspected cold storage (mobile)

The growth of Klondike meat production is hindered by insufficient access to inspected meat facilities.

The challenge of limited access to an abattoir and inspected slaughter was noted in KDO/KFF agriculture surveys in both 2020 and 2024. Without access to inspected slaughter in Dawson, farmers...

- cannot supply restaurants or retail shops with meat
- can only sell uninspected meat from their farm (known as farm gate sales)

Over the past several years, meat producers have had short-term and sometimes unpredictable access to inspected slaughter, which has led them to limit investment in raising animals. Farm gate tends to be a smaller, niche market: it offers a farm to table connection, but requires extra effort from individual customers to make their purchase. The 'inspected' grocery store or restaurant market tends to be the larger market because of the broader consumer/customer reach. **Unpredictability of inspected facilities shrinks access to this larger market and immediately inhibits production.**

Some Dawson area farmers have tried trucking their livestock (pigs) to Whitehorse for processing, and report that this is not financially feasible, and a business cannot be built on this model. As well as being expensive, transporting animals 533 Km (a 6-hour minimum trip) to a Whitehorse abattoir

introduces stress and challenges around humane treatment, with both pork producers and transporters needing to address how to load and unload pigs, account for weather conditions and be prepared for emergency situations.

In 2021 a land-based abattoir feasibility study was conducted, but it indicated that this level of permanent infrastructure could not be economically supported by the small scale of klondike area meat production. However, all that local producers really need to support growth is a confirmed and ideally longer season of access to a mobile abattoir unit. This could be achieved in a couple of ways:

1- The Yukon Government's mobile abattoir (which has spent a couple of weeks in Dawson nearly each autumn for several years) could be permanently located in Dawson City. The abattoir could continue to run under Yukon's program, with additional operation dates made possible by the unit already being in place. Dawson can further support extended operation dates with new local expertise: there are now qualified local contractors who can run the facility and conduct the inspected slaughter process. The abattoir could be placed at a new Agriculture Hub and operated in place or mobile as needed).

2- If the Yukon Government's mobile abattoir is needed in Whitehorse, then local meat producers including Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in farm could collaborate to secure funding and acquire a new mobile abattoir for the Klondike area. (This could be stored at the new Agricultural Hub and then operated in place and/or mobile as needed).

Consistent, predictable access to a mobile red meat abattoir is essential to increase or even maintain current production levels.

Individuals in the community with the specialized training to complete slaughter and butchery should be engaged to operate the mobile abattoir whenever possible so that locals may gain experience in the craft and grow the expertise base of the Klondike meat industry.

Here we should note that Dawson has never had access to a poultry abattoir of any kind. The latent demand for inspected chicken and turkey is completely untapped to date. All locally raised poultry is sold via farm gate, not in-store or restaurant.

A small mobile poultry abattoir would be a game changer, opening up new market opportunities for producers.

Eggs

In recent years, local egg sales have been limited to farm gate with the exception of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm who have acquired the grading and cleaning equipment required for retail sales. TH Farm reports that demand outstrips the supply of their branded eggs. Eggs are one of the top products coming out of Dawson's 'side-gig' farms, reflecting strong market interest but also relative feasibility of this product for small-scale operations. Producers could be supported to expand into retail with access to cleaning and grading equipment, but it is unclear if there is a desire to do so.

Dairy

Raising livestock in the north is challenging, but dairy farmers face additional challenges because they are overwintering their animals, requiring year-round feed and hay supply plus added shelter infrastructure. The technical aspects of preparing dairy products for sale to the public (including health regulations and various equipment to assist in milking or cheese production) are additional hurdles. Local farmers are managing this on a small scale, but support from government in terms of veterinary expertise, equipment servicing and regulatory guidance (as recommended in the 2024 report from Yukon Agriculture⁶) may help existing or new operators in central Yukon establish a foothold in a market that is keen for craft dairy.

Veggies and More

For vegetables and other non-meat agricultural products, support infrastructure and priorities from the 2024 survey are consistent with the survey completed in 2020 (KDO/KFF).

The top 3 support needs identified by non-meat farmers are:

- 1- Tool or equipment library**
- 2- Commercial kitchen**
- 3- Storage (assorted needs)**

Subject to further strategic planning and prioritization, all of these could be projects of the new farming organization, Central Yukon Agriculture Network (CYAN), and potentially be located at a

⁶ Gov. of Yukon, Agriculture Branch (2024). Multi-Year Development Options for Yukon Agriculture, 2024. Upland Agricultural Consulting and Kermode Consulting.

future Agriculture Hub. Operational structures, memberships and/or service fees, partnerships and other details need to be defined, but the organization of local/regional farmers is a promising step with much potential benefit.

Tool or Equipment Library

As with a book library, members borrow items, then return them after use for someone else to borrow. Equipment/tools identified in our recent survey for shared use include items such as rototillers, small tractors and other small machines, and trailers. While larger operations may have acquired these things already, affordable access to such equipment would be of great benefit to the smaller scale farmers. Tool libraries enable savings in up-front costs (not having to buy the equipment outright), savings in labour (when using equipment saves time), and provide access to a much wider assortment of tools than an individual farmer may have capital to purchase.

Commercial Kitchen

Although there are some existing commercial kitchens in Dawson (at TH Hall, curling rink, arena and Minto Park), access to these is limited (due to competition with other leases, activities, events) and rental costs can be prohibitive. A kitchen set up to prepare value-added products could become a feature of a new or existing agricultural hub, one that would expand Hub membership benefits beyond primary producers as well as create a place for emerging entrepreneurs in the agriculture sector to begin exploring business opportunities.

Storage

The 2024 survey revealed a need for various types of storage including enclosed storage lockers, outdoor fenced enclosures and cold storage such as a root-cellar or refrigerated/freezer spaces. In the context of vegetable sales, root cellars or refrigeration would support preservation of produce beyond the picking season and reduce waste. A good root cellar such as the one at Kokopellie farm enables produce to be kept for sales throughout the winter without much loss in quality. Freezer or refrigeration space could be rented to members, and if this were inspected/compliant space, it could support increased meat supply available to the community.

3.6 What's in the works to develop agriculture in the Klondike?

Local Organizational Structures

Local area farmers have identified a need for enhanced collaboration and an ability to advocate for the regional agriculture industry, which is viewed as both distinct from southern Yukon, as well as underserved by existing agriculture associations. Our 2024 survey suggested various organizational structure options to fulfill an advocacy and administrative role, as well as obtain and manage infrastructure and programming to benefit local agriculture development needs. Creation of a new not-for-profit entity was favoured by 68% of survey respondents.

At a February 6 open meeting for farmers, farmer-led management of and advocacy for the local/regional industry via a new not-for-profit organization emerged as the preferred approach to achieving objectives. Since then, Central Yukon Agriculture Network (CYAN) has been formed to include Klondike, Stewart Crossing, and Mayo area farmers and the new board of directors is keen to begin work.

Agricultural Hubs

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in farm is identified as a significant existing hub of agricultural activity, with potential to offer more products and services as they establish and grow the enterprise. In addition to the fresh vegetables, meats, eggs and other items that they sell to consumers, the TH Farm also provides products and services that support farmers. Key examples include bulk sales of straw and feed, hiring refrigerated vehicles and transporting livestock. These services, combined with the activation of key pieces of equipment and infrastructure at or coming to the farm are poised to bridge some gaps and enable collaborative growth in the Klondike agricultural sector. (Further detail on this in Appendix 2.3)

New Klondike Farming (non-profit) Hub

Klondike Farmers including the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in farm are all interested in working together to improve and grow agriculture in the Klondike for the benefit of our community. To complement the infrastructure, services and activity at the TH Farm, critical infrastructure could be placed at a new land-based hub for shared use under the direction of a not-for-profit (i.e. the newly formed CYAN).

Getting the Hub Started

If farming community interest in development of an agricultural hub (Survey: 65% yes, + 17% maybe, depending on what's there) is paired with land from which to base activities, there are few barriers to

establishing a hub that might include a tool library, commercial kitchens, abattoir placement and so on. The hub could be built incrementally over time, with periodic project or infrastructure-specific funding and community labour. Our community's recent experience with wildfires threatening neighbourhoods and farms on both sides of town have created a new awareness of the need to plan for emergencies that may require moving livestock to safe areas. In such cases a land-based hub might also serve emergency readiness goals.

Government of Yukon support in the form of land would be a critical element to establishing a hub for farmers in the Klondike since a secured land base will enable planning to meet the needs identified this winter via surveys and meetings. Conversations with representatives at the Agriculture Branch suggest that a parcel of land in the Henderson Corner area may be a possibility, subject to a process involving consultations.

An organizational entity with capacity to manage activities is the other critical step to establishing a new hub. The newly formed Central Yukon Agriculture Network is getting up to speed and should soon be positioned to initiate this and other work for the benefit of the Klondike region.

Land leases and land matching:

While interest in land matching was low in our survey, (likely due to those responding already having access to land), we heard from 3 people who wanted to find someone to lease their land and 3 people who would like to lease land. In the Dawson context if we could match these 6 people, that would be a great success.

Additionally, the former Vogt farm in the Henderson Corner area could become a land base to help new farmers get started or create opportunities for existing farmers to expand their operations. The farm was purchased by Government of Yukon following the destructive spring flooding of 2023. Yukon's Agriculture Branch has remediated the site and is preparing to offer small parcel land leases. This is an exciting initiative with potential to contribute to agricultural development.

The economic benefits of increased local food production have not been measured in this project, but in a small economy like Dawson or even the Yukon, shifting spending on as basic a necessity as food to local products can make a big difference: substituting imports for local products supports local businesses and jobs, and keeps more dollars circulating in the regional economy. Agriculture is a sector that is primed for growth with opportunities for both raw and value-added products.

APPENDIX 1- SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS

A1.1 Farming in the Klondike Survey Results

Please see survey results online: [2024 Farming in the Klondike Survey Results Presentation](#)

A1.2 Klondike Farmers Forum Meeting Summary

Date: February 6, 2025

Time: 6:00 PM. **Attendance:** 11 people in person at Yukon University, Dawson Campus and 3 online.

Review of KFF

KFF started as a sub-committee of Yukon Agriculture Association. Their first focus was on access to an abattoir and dry storage (re: cost of shipping). KFF & YAA completed an abattoir feasibility study (result: permanent land-based abattoir is not feasible). KFF came up with some strategic priorities, but the momentum wasn't sustained for various reasons.

Where is KFF now?

Timing is good to start some projects and put some pieces in place for local/regional agriculture.

Abattoir access is improving because:

- Mobile abattoir (pending decision from YG) could be placed in Dawson permanently
- Dawson now has individuals who are trained to run an abattoir & provide butchery service

Dry storage and agriculture hub potential:

If KFF acquires access to a site, this location could grow into a hub: could include mobile abattoir, inspected cold storage, possibly animal pens, tool/equipment lending, dry storage, etc.

Options for Organization of Farmers now:

- 1- KFF could remain a committee of Yukon Agriculture Association (YAA)
- 2- KFF could form a new non-profit or co-op.

General agreement that the time has come to establish a non-profit organization mandated to develop Klondike/Central Yukon agriculture. Further steps tabled to another meeting of farming community.

Review of December 2024 Farming in the Klondike Survey Results

The survey presentation was projected, and discussions took place on a slide-by-slide basis.

A1.3 Agriculture Asset Mapping

On February 19, 2025 Klondike Development Organization (KDO) facilitated an in-person asset mapping exercise at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm that included two long-serving year-round farm employees; Derrick Hastings (Farm Manager), Jonathan Robinson (Farm Administrator), plus Megan Waterman (local farmer representing Klondike Farmers Forum (KFF)).

The goal of the exercise was to identify key nodes or 'hubs' of Klondike agricultural activity and associated services and infrastructure that form building blocks enabling current and future agricultural production.



Agricultural Hubs:

1- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in farm is a significant existing hub of agricultural activity, with potential to offer more products and services as they establish and grow the enterprise. In addition to the fresh vegetables, meats and eggs and other items that they sell to consumers in the local market, the TH Farm also provides products and services that support farmers. These services, combined with the activation of key pieces of equipment and infrastructure at or coming to the farm are poised to bridge some gaps and enable collaborative growth in the Klondike agricultural sector.

Ways the TH Farm supports the broad farming community:

Sale of Products:

- Livestock, (such as layers, chicks)
- Seedlings (herbs, veggies, flowers)
- Compost, manure
- Straw, feed, wood shavings (items purchased in bulk for farm, extras can be sold)

Services offered occasionally now that have opportunity to expand:

- Egg grading
- Hiring out refrigerator van & driver for pickups/deliveries of inspected meat, etc.
- Educational programs
- Gardening service (ex. to companies or institutions)
- Cold storage

New services (or coming soon):

- Hiring out livestock trailer/truck to pick up and deliver livestock in the Klondike area (no long hauls) with livestock owner loading and unloading their own animals.
- Purchasing local eggs for grading and retail
- Hunting season butchering
- Temporary fencing for livestock containment (ex. awaiting abattoir or for safety in flood)

Potential Future Services and activities:

- Expanded educational programs and educational tours
- Seed Bank
- Flash Freezing

2- New Klondike Farmers Hub

While the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Farm is an amazing contributor and resource to local agriculture, this one enterprise cannot be expected to be all things to all farmers while running their own operation and fulfilling their own mandate. There is both room and argument for an additional, complementary land-based hub to fill in gaps in infrastructure and services to benefit all our area farmers (including Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in) and subsequently catalyze agricultural development. A parcel of agricultural land (identified by Agriculture Branch in Henderson Corner area) could provide a base for:

- Mobile abattoir (the mobile unit could become stationary or partly stationary at this site, or, if the unit is allocated to remain in Whitehorse, a new abattoir unit could be purchased by the non-profit organization, subject to funding availability)
- Poultry abattoir (inspected poultry slaughter/processing is needed to enable farmers to make the leap from farm gate to retail sales of chicken, turkey, etc. as is not currently possible)
- Livestock containment
- Inspected refrigerated storage (ideally in a bumper pull trailer to maximize its service)
- Tool library

Based on feedback in the recent Farming in the Klondike Survey and discussions at the Klondike Farmers Forum meeting, this former YAA sub-committee/ad-hoc group of farmers seeks to gain agency over their economic futures and create a new not-for-profit society with a mandate to develop agriculture in the area. This will be the entity best suited to building the new agricultural hub described here.

Other Contributors to the Klondike Agriculture Sector

Local Farms and Farmers

Local farmers are the heavy lifters responsible for primary agriculture production. Whether raising animals or growing vegetables, fruits, grains and more, our community's farmers are contributing to food security, reducing reliance on imports, improving access to fresh and high-quality foods, enabling local agri-production, creating jobs, supporting other local businesses and contributing to the economy.

Each farm has their own set of equipment and tools that may be informally shared from time to time, however the intangible but vitally important asset within these independent operations is the body of knowledge and experience held by the individual farmers. In future, 'Hub' activities could include events that bring regional farmers together for networking, knowledge sharing, and other exchanges.

Regional Businesses Network

Services:

Although not specifically oriented to supporting Klondike Agriculture, the following local businesses provide important products or services to farms/farmers and facilitate agricultural activity:

Arctic Inland and Dawson Hardware: compost, manure, fertilizer, lumber and other materials and tools.

Manitoulin, Pacific Northwest (PNW), A-1: Freight services are an important element of farming in the Klondike area since many inputs, equipment and other supplies are not produced locally, or not available locally in sufficient quantity and must be sourced in Whitehorse or further afield.

Graf Enviro Services: Local transportation services (ex. moving the mobile abattoir)

Borealis Printing: Local print services, notably labels (for egg cartons, etc.)

Grenon Enterprises, Gammie Trucking and Graf Enviro Services: digging and other earthworks, gravel, topsoil, etc.

Customers

Local Businesses and institutions support local agriculture through their purchases.

Grocery Stores: (Bonanza Market and DC General Store) retail some local produce. Challenges around wholesale price point, consistency of product supply, and minimal access to inspected meat services limit the ability of farmers to sell in stores. Nevertheless, retailers offer access to a larger consumer market and is an area with potential for growth.

Restaurants, institutions and work camps: purchasing local meats, eggs and produce in large quantities makes them important customers.

Yukon Government

Yukon's funding programs for farmers, agriculture development and economic development are not listed here but are recognized as an important financial resource for both individual operations and collective activities.

Yukon's Agriculture Branch plays a critical role supporting meat production in the Klondike through provision of the mobile abattoir and funding an associated inspected slaughter contract. At current levels of production, there is no business case to support a privately owned and operated abattoir in the Dawson area. Nor is it economical to transport livestock to Whitehorse for slaughter. Government support is therefore essential for inspected meat production in the area. Consistent delivery of this

service is required to enable farms to plan their production, whereas inconsistency or uncertainty of this service results in measurable shrinkage in Klondike area meat production.

Farmer's Market

Dawson's Farmer's Market which operates Saturday and Sunday afternoons in Riverside Park during the summer is an important point of sales for some Klondike area farmers and agri-producers. It's also an informal gathering place fostering:

- communication and sharing of information between farmers, and between farmers and public.
- an effective promotional activity that raises the profile of local agriculture and fosters connections between farm and 'table', producer and customer.

Conservation Klondike Society (CKS)

The CKS has recently phased out of their prior focus on recycling and is looking to pursue new environmentally beneficial projects through the building they own on 2nd Ave. in downtown Dawson. The group (per Derrick Hastings) identifies the following potential roles (subject to funding to enable renovation of the building):

- Retail space for sale of local agricultural and other products
- Cold storage (to facilitate retail food sales and extend seasonality of vegetables, etc.)
- Commercial kitchen (to enable greater production of value-added products)

Note: The above offers highlights and is not an exhaustive list of contributors or potential contributors to agriculture in the Klondike.