



Energy, Mines and Resources
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2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy Agriculture Land Development Guidelines

The *Vision for Yukon Agriculture: 2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy* states:

For soil based operations, the [Farm Development Agreement] will include, but not necessarily be limited to, a requirement that at least two thirds of 80% of the land parcel be cleared, developed and in production with a crop suitable for human or animal consumption, prior to going to title. (*Section 3.5.6 c.1.i*)

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE

The variability in development work between parcels of land that have been approved for title is a concern of the public and individuals engaged in agriculture. These guidelines address this concern by providing development standards that meets the objectives of the *2006 Yukon Agriculture Policy*. The following guidelines detail how “cleared, developed and in production” (the land development component of the Agreements for Sale) will be reviewed “prior to going to title.”

STANDARDS FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT

Clearing

The initial clearing of land will require the removal of natural vegetation. The cost of clearing rises with increasing volumes of vegetation and heavily timbered sites are the most expensive to develop. Valuable timber resources should be used to the fullest extent possible as logs, lumber, fencing material or fuel wood.

The clearing approach is determined by the vegetation cover type and field layout. Shrub vegetation is typically sheared at ground level. Depending on forest cover, techniques may include selective logging, clear cutting fields and/or walk-down using machinery to push over trees and then salvaging the timber.

Clearing also includes grubbing and piling of roots and should be completed in such a fashion as to ensure that as much topsoil as possible remains in fields and not in piled debris.

Woody materials (windrows) piled within a field impact the productivity and farming efficiencies of a parcel and therefore must be kept to a minimum or removed completely for this development component to be deemed complete.

Breaking

Breaking is a required component of the development contract. It is required to adequately prepare the seed bed by mixing the top duff layer with a minimum 15 cm (6 inches) of underlying soil and to break up any small woody material and roots in the field. This is best accomplished with a heavy breaking disc.

During this phase of the development, time spent removing sticks, roots and rocks will pay dividends with better plant establishment and fewer equipment break downs when crops are being harvested.

Seeding

Seeding is best accomplished by planting into the soil at a set depth with a seed drill. However, there are some circumstances where it is appropriate to broadcast seed into portions of developed fields. Prior to undertaking broadcast seeding, the agreement-for-sale-holder must make arrangements with the Agriculture Development Officer to confirm the appropriateness of its application.

Seeding rates are an important component of functional land development. Seeding rates in kilograms per hectare will vary depending on the size and weight of the seed of the crop species sown. The standard for seedling establishment shall be 250 plants per sq. m. at the second leaf stage of growth.

Yukon soils are low in organic matter. It is common practice to plant an initial crop of green manure such as oats or fall rye that will be ploughed under to improve the quality of fields. This approach accomplishes a number of desired objectives. It adds important organic matter to the soil and allows for another opportunity to remove sticks, roots and rocks from the fields.

FURTHER GUIDELINE

Shelter belts

Shelter belts, consisting of natural forest to reduce the harmful effects of wind on the agriculture potential of a parcel of land, may be included as part of the development commitment when environmental conditions warrant. In order to ensure that shelterbelts are included in the land development calculation, agreement for sale holders are required to meet with the Agriculture Development Officer prior to clearing to confirm the usefulness of shelter belts to meet conservation goals and optimize their placement in the field layout.