

## **SECTION 1**

### **History of BCIA**

Shortly after the First World War, it became apparent to a group of scientists working in Canadian agriculture that it was essential to have an organization that could bring all agricultural scientists together, to discuss common problems, consider new findings and developments, and generally correlate the work of the various branches of science.

Five individuals were appointed to seek a solution, the result being the Canadian Society of Technical Agriculturalists (CSTA). The first organizing convention was held in 1920, and Dr. L.S. Klinck of the University of British Columbia was elected president. In 1945, the organization's name was changed to the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC).

The British North America Act gave full power of formation, recognition and control of all professional groups to provincial legislatures. Therefore, the AIC could not gain legal professional status for all its members on a country-wide basis, and each province would have to form its own body for this purpose.

In April 1947, the BC legislature passed the *Agrologists Act*, creating the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA). The Institute's Bylaws came into force on June 1st of that year.

As it is today, the Institute's role was to protect the public interest through the governing of the professional conduct of its members. Agrology in the 1947 Act was very narrowly defined, applying almost exclusively to those working in the agri-food industry.

In 2003, a new *Agrologists Act* was brought into force. The new Act was part of a general policy of the government to place greater reliance on the self-regulating professions for policing professional behaviour and setting and maintaining professional standards.

Agrology, once almost solely concerned with agriculture, became more broadly defined as:

"... using agricultural and natural sciences and agricultural and resource economics, including collecting or analyzing data or carrying out research or assessments, to design, evaluate, advise on, direct or otherwise provide professional support to:

(a) the cultivation, production, improvement, processing or marketing of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals, or

(b) the classification, management, use, conservation, protection, restoration, reclamation or enhancement of aquatic or terrestrial ecosystems that are affected by, sustain, or have the potential to sustain the cultivation or production of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals."

In 2018 the Government of British Columbia passed the *Professional Governance Act* (“PGA”). After a long period of consultation with professional regulators, most of the PGA was proclaimed into force in February 2021. Among numerous significant changes under the PGA was a new definition of “regulated practice,” which is commonly referred to as the definition of agrology. That definition provides as follows:

*(a) Advice or services that*

*i. Are based on agricultural or natural sciences or agricultural or resource economics, and*

*ii. Relate to*

*(A) Cultivation, production, improvement, processing, marketing or management of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals,*

*(B) Classification, management, use, conservation, protection or enhancements of aquatic, terrestrial or atmospheric ecosystems that are affected by, sustain or have the potential to sustain the cultivation or production of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals, or*

*(C) Restoration, reclamation or remediation of aquatic, terrestrial or atmospheric ecosystems;*

*(b) Advice or services that are ancillary to those described in paragraph (a).*

*The practice of agrology does not include the provision of advice or services within the reserved practice of a registrant of another regulatory body.*

Another significant change within the PGA is granting practice rights to the profession whereby certain stipulated activities will be restricted only to Registrants of BCIA. The specifics of those rights are still being negotiated with the Government of BC with an expected enactment date of early 2023.

Today’s BCIA has over 1800 members with more than 1400 Registrants in the active practice designation of Professional Agrologists (PAg), Articling Agrologists (AAg), and the new designations brought in by the PGA of Technical Agrologist (TAg) and Articling Technical Agrologist (ATAg) working in British Columbia.