

DISASTER

Producers look beyond 2021's floods

7

DISEASE

Movement of poultry banned to curb AI threat

11

CROPS

Hazelnut industry continues to thrive

21



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Dry season

Delayed rains
deepen
drought

PETER MITHAM

ABBOTSFORD – A long, dry fall was exactly what many growers hoped for as cool weather delayed planting this spring, but it's also pushed a record number of watersheds into extreme drought.

By late October, provincial authorities had declared Level 5 drought in 10 of the province's 34 water supply basins. All of Vancouver Island as well as all basins on the South Coast and in the Peace were experiencing severe drought. The northern Fort Nelson and southern Kettle basins were also Level 5, where adverse impacts are "almost certain."

A year ago, just four basins were rated Level 5 before rain began falling in September.

The late arrival of rain this

See DROUGHT on next page ↵

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Final inspection

Jodine Leslie of Okanagan Sunshine Fruit Packers gives one last look to a run of Ambrosia apples before they're packed and off to market. Opened last year, the Kelowna plant is owned by Surjit and Jagdeep Gill. Centrally located to serve their expanding operations that run from Osoyoos to Armstrong, the plant's state-of-the-art lines emphasize food traceability and safety. **MYRNA STARK LEADER**

Country Life in BC wins awards

PETER MITHAM

REGINA – An unprecedented year for BC farmers led to unprecedented recognition for *Country Life in BC* at the Canadian Farm Writers Federation awards in Regina, October 1.

The paper received a record eight awards for its coverage of last year's extreme weather and resilient people in words and photographs.

Photo of the Year went to Chelsea Meier of U&D Meier Dairy Ltd. in Abbotsford,

whose front-page drone shot of last November's flooding on Sumas Prairie also won top spot in the Landscape class. It captured the family's farm surrounded by rising water as she stood on the deck awaiting rescue.

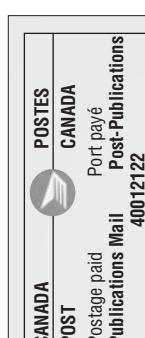
It's the paper's second Photo of the Year award. The first, four years ago, captured the devastation of another unprecedented event – the 2017 wildfires in the Chilcotin.

Kamloops photographer Murray Mitchell received a bronze award in the People category for his photo of

Rhonda and Wayne MacDonald of Merritt on the cover of the November 2021 issue. Wildfire ripped through the MacDonald ranch last summer, and the couple have since faced two subsequent weather-related disasters.

Mitchell's photo bumped contributor Ronda Payne's photo of Vic Forster and Theresa O'Connor tossing cranberries for the camera at Riverside Cranberries in Langley off the November 2021 cover, but it came out

See KUDOS on next page ↵



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