



**Ministry
of
Agriculture and Food
2023/2024 Estimates Binder**

Extra Copy

**Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Estimates 2023/2024
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SPEAKING NOTES FOR

Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food
Estimates Debate – Opening Remarks

Thank you, Honourable Chair. I'd like to begin by acknowledging we are on the territories of the Lekwungen [lek-WUN-ghun] speaking peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

I'd like to welcome the Opposition Critic and I'm looking forward to talking about the ministry's budget for the 2023 fiscal year and the progress our government is making on strengthening B.C.'s agriculture and food sector.

I'm joined by Peter Pokorny, the Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. And I'll also be supported throughout these proceedings by Assistant Deputy Ministers Eric Kristianson, Michelle Koski and Ranbir Parmar, as well as Executive Lead, Paul Squires and CEO of the Agricultural Land Commission, Kim Grout.

Our government has supported the growth of B.C.'s agriculture and food sector with record levels of investment.

This helped B.C.'s agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sectors post record revenues of over \$18.1 billion in 2021 despite the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related weather emergencies.

And with Budget 23, we are in a strong position to continue that upward trend and help our farmers and producers, even as they deal with more challenges such as avian influenza, rising input costs from global inflation and supply chain disruptions.

I'm pleased to note that the ministry's budget has increased by close to \$30 million since our government was elected in 2017.

This shows we are serious about supporting B.C.'s hard-working farming families and those who provide us with the food and drinks we all enjoy.

Budget 2023 will continue to support this good work with an increase of \$4.4 million that will go towards government's shared recovery mandate and our ministry's work to support Clean BC and the climate preparedness and adaptation strategy.

Our government is also making changes to support B.C.'s greenhouse growers by replacing the Carbon Tax Relief Grant with a point-of-sale exemption that will improve the cash-flow and efficiency of businesses so growers can focus on producing

the produce and plants British Columbians enjoy. I would note that this is a Ministry of Finance line item, and it will replace the current carbon tax relief grant.

We will continue to support our ministry's hallmark programs of Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC through Budget 23. This includes supporting the Province's new school food program through Feed BC.

We will also continue to support the Feed BC partnership between farmers, producers, distributors and our hospitals, care homes and post-secondary institutions. There is more locally grown and processed food being served to patients, care home residents and students than ever before, giving them healthier, nutritious, and delicious meals!

Places like Okanagan College are serving about 40 per cent locally sourced produce, meat and dairy on campus. And the new Market at Okanagan College just opened up in September and is providing students, faculty and visitors with an incredible diversity of Okanagan food highlighting the farm-to-table approach.

Of course, we continue to support Buy BC which makes it easier for British Columbians to identify local food and support local farmers and producers. There are close to 3,500 products now sporting the Buy BC logo and helping farmers and businesses generate increased sales.

And with Grow BC, we continue to help new and young farmers find land through our land matching program with the Young Agrarians.

We've supported 245 farmland matches between new farmers and landholders bringing close to 10,000 acres of B.C. farmland into production.

As mentioned, this budget will continue to support our government's leading edge Clean BC climate plan. As a long-time Fraser Valley resident, I witnessed first-hand, the devastating impacts of the 2021 atmospheric river and flood. And the emotional and financial toll it had on our agriculture community.

I was so proud of the resiliency and community spirit shown in the aftermath of what the worst agriculture disaster ever for B.C. We had farmers helping farmers and neighbours opening up their homes and hearts to make sure people were sheltered and fed.

This is something we never want to experience again but we know our changing climate will continue to be unpredictable and we will likely see more and more extreme weather in the future. For their part, farmers know their land and their crops and what needs to be done to prepare for and mitigate these impacts from climate change. And we are here to support them.

Through last year's budget we were able to increase our funding for the Beneficial Management Practices program which enables farmers to take steps to better protect the air, land and water.

We also introduced a new extreme weather preparedness program which is helping farmers and ranchers with projects like retrofitting farm buildings in preparation for potential wildfires, installing flood resilient feed storage and improving barn cooling systems. We will continue to support these programs and more through Budget 23.

In addition, as part of the historic investment in food security we discussed a few weeks ago, farmers and communities will be able to apply for funding that they can use to proactively purchase equipment and make infrastructure improvements that will help in future emergency events.

We know how important it is to our farmers and food processors that we make these types of investments. It is an investment in their future as well as an investment in the supply and affordability of healthy food for British Columbians.

This budget will also support the ministry priorities over the next fiscal year which largely fall under four main areas:

1. Supporting farmers and agricultural business grow by enhancing current programs and implementing new programs so that everyone in British Columbians can enjoy a secure and affordable supply of food. This includes the Feed, Grow and Buy BC suite of programs I mentioned earlier, as well as our Business Risk management programs.

2. Our government's commitment to Indigenous communities and meaningful reconciliation. B.C.'s Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food is the first of its kind in Canada and we are working closely with them on the best path forward to increasing Indigenous participation in food production and processing. This includes creating new economic opportunities as well as ensuring self-sustainability when it comes to feeding Indigenous communities.
3. Making sure are farmers and producers are set up for success so they can benefit from increased domestic trade and international export of B.C.'s agricultural products. As we look at ways to grow and process more food, we will be able to build on our already successful reputation for

high-quality food and beverage products nationally and internationally.

4. And the final theme is one I've already talked about which is the importance of building on our climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts here in B.C. so we can support our famers, ranchers, fishers and processors.

I'm proud to say this is a Ministry of Agriculture and Food that is built for the future and we have a budget that will help accomplish our forward-looking priorities, which reflect many of the things that are most important to our agriculture and food sector as well as to British Columbians.

Our government is investing in a stronger tomorrow and focussing on what matters most to people.

With that, Honourable Chair, I'd be happy to take questions from the Honourable Member.



SHORT VERSION
SPEAKING NOTES FOR

Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food
Estimates Debate – Opening Remarks

Thank you, Honourable Chair. I'd like to begin by acknowledging we are on the territories of the Lekwungen [lek-WUN-ghun] speaking peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

I'd like to welcome the Opposition Critic and I'm looking forward to talking about the ministry's budget for the 2023 fiscal year and the progress our government is making on strengthening B.C.'s agriculture and food sector.

I'm joined by Peter Pokorny, the Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. And I'll also be supported throughout these proceedings by:

- Assistant Deputy Ministers Eric Kristianson and Michelle Koski;
- Executive Lead, Paul Squires;

- Executive Financial Officer Ranbir Parmar; and
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Agricultural Land Commission, Kim Grout.

I know that the Opposition Critic and his colleagues will have many questions for me, and that our time is somewhat constrained, so with that, Honourable Chair, I'd be happy to dive right in and take questions from the Honourable Member.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Operating Budget - 2022/23 Restated to 2023/24
by Group Account Classification (GAC) and Votes (\$000)

Group Account Classification (GAC)	2022/23 Restated	2023/24 Estimates	Increase (Decrease)	% Change
Ministry Operations				
Salaries and benefits	32,376	35,662	3,286	10.15%
Operating costs	11,875	12,504	629	5.30%
Government transfers	52,385	56,070	3,685	7.03%
Other expenses	16,615	13,441	(3,174)	-19.10%
Recoveries	(24,431)	(24,431)	-	0.00%
Ministry Operations Total	88,820	93,246	4,426	5%
Agricultural Land Commission				
Salaries and benefits	2,773	4,114	1,341	48.36%
Operating costs	2,228	1,201	(1,027)	-46.10%
Other expenses	3	3	-	0.00%
Recoveries	(3)	(3)	-	0.00%
Agricultural Land Commission Total	5,001	5,315	314	6%
Production Insurance Special Account				
Operating costs	1,250	1,250	-	0.00%
Other expenses	21,951	21,951	-	0.00%
Other expenses - Elimination	(10,000)	(10,000)	-	0.00%
Recoveries	(1)	(1)	-	0.00%
Production Insurance Special Account Total	13,200	13,200	-	0%
Grand Total	107,021	111,761	4,740	4%
All Votes & Special Accounts				
	2022/23 Restated	2023/24 Estimates	Increase (Decrease)	% Increase (Decrease)
Salaries and Benefits	35,149	39,776	4,627	13%
Operating Costs	15,353	14,955	(398)	(3%)
Government Transfers	52,385	56,070	3,685	7%
Other Expenses	28,569	25,395	(3,174)	(11%)
Recoveries	(24,435)	(24,435)	-	-
	107,021	111,761	4,740	4%

Ministry of Agriculture and Food
2023/24 Budget changes by Core Business (\$000)

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26
	Restated	Change	Estimates	Change	Plan	Change	Plan
Ministry Operations							
Science, Policy and Inspection	16,146	1,319	17,465	284	17,749	-	17,749
Agriculture Resource	64,373	3,015	67,388	604	67,992	-	67,992
BC Farm Industry Review Board	1,378	49	1,427	10	1,437	-	1,437
Executive and Support Services	6,923	43	6,966	20	6,986	-	6,986
Sub-Total	88,820	4,426	93,246	918	94,164	-	94,164
Agricultural Land Commission	5,001	314	5,315	68	5,383	-	5,383
Production Insurance Account Net	13,200	-	13,200	-	13,200	-	13,200
TOTAL Ministry	107,021	4,740	111,761	986	112,747	-	112,747
Percent Change			4.43%		0.88%		0.00%

2023/24 Changes Include - Increase of \$4.740M

- 3.420 M increase to salary and benefits for the Shared Recovery Mandate
- 1.000 M increase to fund the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS) Budget 2022 decision
- 0.371 M increase to support the implementation of a new School Food Programs Framework
- 0.051 M overall decrease to Minister's Office to reflect current staff complement (B2023 - \$62K decrease & B2021 - \$11K increase)
- 4.740 Total change

2024/25 Changes Include - Increase of \$0.986M

- 0.717 M increase to salary and benefits for the Shared Recovery Mandate
- 0.269 M increase to support the implementation of a new School Food Programs Framework
- 0.986 Total change

Ministry **Ministry of Agriculture and Food**

Type	Core Business	Budget			
		2023	2024	2025	2026
CB00 Operating Expenses	NC405 Science, Policy and Inspection	16,146,000	17,465,000	17,749,000	17,749,000
	NC425 Agriculture Resources	64,373,000	67,388,000	67,992,000	67,992,000
	NC440 BC Farm Industry Review Board	1,378,000	1,427,000	1,437,000	1,437,000
	NC445 Executive and Support Services	6,923,000	6,966,000	6,986,000	6,986,000
	NC460 Agricultural Land Commission	5,001,000	5,315,000	5,383,000	5,383,000
	NC470 Production Insurance Account	13,200,000	13,200,000	13,200,000	13,200,000
CB00 Operating Expenses		107,021,000	111,761,000	112,747,000	112,747,000
Total					
CB45 Capital Expenditures	NC445 Executive and Support Services	1,229,000	875,000	853,000	853,000
CB45 Capital Expenditures		1,229,000	875,000	853,000	853,000
Total					

Report name: P2 Core Bus Summary analysis

Ministry of Agriculture and Food - Budget 2023 Highlights

- The Ministry budget of **\$111.761M** in 2023/24 is made up of the Ministry Operations vote, the Agricultural Land Commission vote, and the Production Insurance Special Account.

Ministry Operations

Budget 2023 increased by \$4.426M over the restated 2022/23 budget:

- **\$3.106M** for the Shared Recovery Mandate
- **\$1.000M** additional funding for Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (Budget 2022 decision)
- **\$0.371M** to support the implementation of a new School Food Programs Framework
- **\$0.051M decrease** to Minister's Office to reflect current staff complement
- The Ministry Operations budget (Vote 13) in 2023/24 is **\$93.246M** – **\$4.426M or 5% greater** than the 2022/23 restated budget of \$88.820M.
- The Ministry Operations budget is \$94.164M for 2024/25 and 2025/26.
 - The **\$0.918M increase** from 2023/24 is due to **\$0.649M** additional funding for the Shared Recovery Mandate and **\$0.269M** additional funding for the School Food Programs Framework

Agricultural Land Commission

- The budget for the Agricultural Land Commission (Vote 14) in 2023/24 is **\$5.315M** – this represents an increase of **\$0.314M** for the Shared Recovery Mandate
- The budget for ALC is **\$5.383M** for 2024/25 and 2025/26, an additional increase of **\$0.068M** for the Shared Recovery Mandate

Production Insurance Special Account

- The budget for the Production Insurance Special Account remains at **\$13.200M** for all years of Budget 2023.

Capital

The Ministry's capital budget in 2023/24 is **\$0.875M** – a decrease of **\$0.354M** from the 2022/23 restated budget.

- **\$0.354M** decrease is due to Fleet vehicle replacement reprofiled and uplift for Zero Emission Vehicles received in 2022/23 only
- The capital budget is **\$0.853M** for 2024/25 and 2025/26, a decrease of **\$0.022M** due to the Vehicle Supply Chain Disruption Funding received in 2023/24 only

**Ministry of
Agriculture and Food**

**2023/24 – 2025/26
Service Plan**

February 2023



For more information on the Ministry of Agriculture and Food contact:

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Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Alexis".

Honourable Pam Alexis
Minister of Agriculture and Food
February 10, 2023

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Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Ministry of Agriculture and Food will support the government’s priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister’s Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) is responsible for three main areas of work. The first is the production, marketing, and processing of agriculture and seafood products. The second is the carrying out of research, climate action, food safety and plant and animal health programs, projects and undertakings relating to agriculture, seafood and food and beverage processing. The third is the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture, seafood and food and beverage processing.

The Ministry is a key contributor to economic development and diversification across the province and a main contributor to rural economic development and province-wide job creation, particularly for small businesses. The Ministry is working towards a secure food supply, by helping B.C. producers and processors to be resilient to the impacts of climate change and making more locally-produced food available to British Columbians. The agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sector creates economic and social benefits for Indigenous and underrepresented groups, attracts provincial investment, and contributes to workforce development and skills training.

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 30 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the Ministry. A [complete list of legislation for which the Ministry is responsible](#) is available online.

Operating Environment

Building a resilient food system and increasing food security is of key importance to the Ministry. In recent years, the agriculture, food and beverage sector has faced significant challenges; this includes the COVID-19 Pandemic and extreme weather events linked to climate change, such as the atmospheric river flood in November 2021. The Ministry has responded to these challenges by taking meaningful actions focused on a strong recovery. This work has yielded positive results with B.C. agriculture, seafood and processed food & beverage sales reaching \$18.05 billion in 2021, a 12.1 percent increase from 2020. In 2021 B.C. also set a new record for annual exports of \$5.11 billion, a 5.7 percent increase from 2020 with B.C. products being exported to 151 different international markets in 2021.

Over the 2023/2024 fiscal year, the Ministry will be continuing work to build the resiliency of food systems in the province. This includes taking action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. One way the Ministry is approaching this is through the [Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech strategic framework](#), which was publicly released January 27, 2023. Ministry actions in the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 will continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the sector by supporting agricultural producers to incorporate additional on farm climate mitigative actions and enhance carbon sequestration. Ministry actions in the [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy: Actions for 2022-2025](#) will continue to support agricultural producers to adapt to climate change while supporting the development of water infrastructure and other on-farm preparedness and adaptation strategies.

On April 1, 2023, the five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is expected to come into force, allocating \$3.5 billion to agricultural programming across Canada (2023-2028). This agreement builds upon the current Canadian Agricultural Partnership (2018-2023) and places a greater focus on programming to support climate action, increasing sector competitiveness, revenue and exports, and increased participation of Indigenous Peoples, women and youth.

Ensuring a resilient provincial food supply is crucial to our food security. In 2023/2024 the Ministry will begin work on an emergency preparedness strategy for food security in collaboration the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. The Ministry will also continue to support local food systems and food security through Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programs. This framework advances the goals of StrongerBC by continuing to support people, communities and business to build resilience through a targeted suite of programs that improve the sustainability of production and support increased industry competitiveness, build the value of and access to B.C. grown and processed food, and increasing consumer awareness, demand and market access for local products. Provincial food safety initiatives will continue to support growing demand for food safety certification from local food systems and food safety inspections of locally produced food products.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy has been resilient to pandemic, geopolitical and climate-related disruptions. However, higher interest rates are expected to weigh on the economy in the coming years. Following a rapid recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation led to successive interest rate increases from the Bank of Canada in 2022. The impact of higher interest rates has been evident in housing markets and there is uncertainty over its transmission to the rest of the economy in B.C. and among our trading partners. B.C. is heading into this challenging period in relatively strong position, with a low unemployment rate. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 3.0 per cent in 2022 and expects growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.6 per cent in 2024. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 3.4 per cent in 2022 and projects national real GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.5 per cent in 2024. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The risks to B.C.'s economic outlook center around interest rates and inflation, such as the risk of further inflationary supply chain disruptions, the potential for more interest rate increases than expected, and uncertainty around the depth and timing of the impact on housing markets. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, the emergence of further COVID-19 variants of concern and lower commodity prices.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Strengthen B.C.'s food security and provincial food systems

Strengthening provincial food security through a sustainable agriculture and food sector and responsible land use remains a provincial priority as it contributes to a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

Objective 1.1: Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods

Enhancing the Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC suite of programs will drive economic and job growth across the sector, increase the safety and availability of local food, and build the sustainability and reliability of the provincial food system. Integrated programs targeting industry renewal and competitiveness, sustainability, and capacity will address gaps in food supply resilience.

Key Strategies

- Expand Grow BC by focusing on industry competitiveness, capacity building, sustainability with targeted programs to increase participation of underrepresented groups such as Indigenous Peoples, new entrants, and youth.
- Increase the awareness of the Buy BC brand with B.C. citizens and the availability and promotion of Buy BC licensed products at grocery stores across B.C.
- Enhance Feed BC by building demand for local foods in more B.C. public institutions through partnerships with key sectors such as health, post-secondary, and corrections, facilitating value chain innovation to connect demand to supply, and supporting the readiness and connection to opportunities of B.C. businesses to supply more locally grown and processed food.
- Integrate Feed BC into the Province's School Meals Framework to increase local food use and opportunities within B.C.'s K-12 school system.

Discussion

The Ministry has an integrated suite of programs and strategies to support this objective's implementation. Programs are delivered through various methods including agreements and partnerships with other government bodies, industry associations, expert program delivery agents, local governments, education institutions, and public health. Under Grow BC, this includes implementation of Year 2 actions under the [The Path Forward: A blueprint for B.C.'s tree fruit industry](#) and supports for industry renewal and regional extension. Under Buy BC, this involves evaluations and audits to support the refinement and further targeting of Buy BC programming to meet industry needs. Under Feed BC, the forecast forward reflects anticipated growth supported by two Ministry mandates to expand Feed BC and to integrate

Feed BC into K-12 schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Child Care's mandate to ensure students are fed for learning.

Objective 1.2: Working with Indigenous people on agricultural economic development and food security

Working in cooperation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples to support meaningful reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination is important for the Ministry. This includes understanding the historic and systemic barriers to Indigenous participation in the sector, their agriculture economic development and food security interests, and developing distinction-based approaches that enable capacity building, improve social, cultural and economic well-being, and lead to the equitable participation for Indigenous peoples in the sector.

Key Strategies

- Work with the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food and other Indigenous partners, as a part of the action laid out in the Declaration Act Action Plan, to identify opportunities to strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector.
- Address barriers to participation and consider the needs of Indigenous peoples to strengthen relationships and better integrate Indigenous priorities, perspectives and food system needs into programming.
- Work with government partners to improve our collective understanding of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and interests on food security and food sovereignty to guide planning and action in B.C.

Discussion

Supporting Indigenous communities to meet their food security, food sovereignty and economic development goals is a vital part of strengthening community food security in B.C. Forming the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food was a crucial step towards strengthening the equitable participation of Indigenous peoples in B.C.'s agriculture and food sector. The Council is the first of its kind in Canada and guided by a three-year [Strategic Plan](#).

The Ministry also has an Indigenous Agriculture and Food team who support First Nations and Métis communities and entrepreneurs in the development and growth of their agriculture and food businesses, and other programs that support Indigenous governments, communities and organizations develop farm businesses and food security.

Objective 1.3: Expand the data available on the Agricultural Land Reserve

Ensuring the Ministry has data and information on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) usage is critical for making land use decisions, informing an array of Ministry and government priorities

and supporting partnerships with farmers, industry and government in developing long-term planning and food security in the province. Maintaining a province-wide Agricultural Land Use Inventory was a recommendation from the [“Revitalizing the ALR and the Agricultural Land Commission” Final Committee Report](#) to support policy and program development and the ALR.

Key Strategies

- Accelerate the pace of ALUI to establish a full and updated provincial baseline.
- Invest in research and development into new technologies to ensure a more sustainable ALUI program and enable more frequent ALUI updates.
- Develop an online portal to ensure that all ALUI data is readily accessible with tools available to facilitate data informed decisions on the land base.

Discussion

To make informed decisions, the Province needs to know how the ALR is being used and have data that is current and available province-wide. This includes information on the types and amount of farming that is occurring, as well as the volume of value-added and processing activities underway. ALUIs collect consistent, credible, and comprehensive data about land use and land cover on agricultural lands across the province.

There are many decision-makers on the ALR, including local governments, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and numerous provincial government ministries. Having access to data to definitively demonstrate what is occurring on the ALR (and how things are changing), will result in better decisions, policies, and regulations. ALUIs have the potential to be a powerful tool but the information must be current, comprehensive, and accessible. The Ministry has developed a strategy to deliver a fully updated provincial baseline and the tools and methodologies in place to ensure this information remains up to date and accessible.

Performance Measures

Performance Measures	2021/22 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
1a Number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to working towards a minimum 30 percent B.C. food expenditures within total annual food expenditures	190	195	205	215	225
1b Number of Buy BC logo licensed products	3,167	4,000	4,500	5,000	5,500

Data source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

Discussion

1a Feed BC partner facilities: Increasing the number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to and are tracking towards a minimum 30 percent B.C. food within their total annual food expenditures provides new market opportunities for B.C. producers and processors and supports increased provincial food supply and food system resilience.

1b Buy BC logo licensed products: Increasing the number of Buy BC logo licensed products that are grown, harvested, raised, or processed in B.C., along with undertaking Buy BC activities focused on online engagement, promotional campaigns, retail and industry partnerships, drives increased consumer awareness of the Buy BC brand and expands local food purchasing.

By supporting local food actions and addressing barriers that public sector institutions (e.g. hospitals, residential care facilities, public post-secondary institutions, schools and other government supported facilities) have experienced in getting B.C. food products into their institutions, the Ministry advances the availability of B.C. food products for British Columbians and supports local communities, jobs and economic development throughout the province.

Goal 2: Support the B.C. agriculture and food sector to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate and an emerging low-carbon economy

Globally, climate change threatens food security. Food producers are adapting or preparing for both an increasing frequency and severity of climate-related events and longer-term impacts of climate change. The scale and scope of this challenge requires support from government to help facilitate the sector's continued efforts to become ready for climate-related events, contribute to emission reduction solutions, and ensure that British Columbia's long-term food security can be protected.

Objective 2.1: Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience

In recent years, British Columbians have experienced the full spectrum of climate-related events (e.g., extreme heat, wildfires, floods), and few sectors have been hit as hard as agriculture. Climate science tells us that this trend is only going to intensify over the coming decades as we face increasingly frequent and damaging climate-related events. In addition to these events, climate driven emergence of pests and pathogens in animals and plants will also increase.

The Province of B.C. has adopted the United Nations Sendai Framework, which outlines five key priorities that are guiding the Ministry's evolving approach to climate related events and the associated risk: (1) understanding risk; (2) strengthening risk governance to manage risk; (3) investing in mitigation for resilience and; (4) enhancing preparedness for effective response; (5) capacity building for resilience and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Key Strategies

- *Understanding risk:* Continued investment in science and monitoring capacities to understand climate changes in B.C.'s weather and the impacts of these changes on the availability of agricultural water, drought and flood risks, ocean acidification and hypoxia, invasive species, diseases, pests, and other climate stressors.
- *Strengthening governance:* Increasing resourcing to the Emergency Management Unit within the Ministry to provide expertise and support coordination for preparedness, mitigation, and response efforts involving the agriculture sector.
- *Investing in mitigation for resilience:* Launch of a cost-shared Extreme Weather Preparedness Program to provide cost-shared supports for agricultural producers to protect their operations from extreme weather events.
- *Enhancing preparedness:* In coordination with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and other agencies, development of an Emergency Preparedness Strategy for Food Security. The Ministry will also support industry efforts to improve response capacity for plant and animal health risks, including but not limited to Avian Influenza.

- *Capacity building for resilience:* Establish outreach and education programs for local authorities, First Nations, and industry organizations to support agriculture sector resiliency in the face of rapidly changing climate-related risk profiles.

Discussion

In the wake of the atmospheric river in 2021, the Ministry has been scaling up its capacity to address emerging emergency events and strengthening the overall climate readiness of the food and agricultural sector. Work towards this objective is being supported by setting up new roles and organizational units within the Ministry, including improved resourcing of the specialized Emergency Management Unit and the expansion of regional extension services supporting producers in adapting to climate change.

Objective 2.2: Increase uptake of regenerative practices and other on-farm and food processing innovations that support sustainability and reduce emissions

Regenerative agriculture practices offer producers the chance to play an active role to reduce threats to food production posed by climate change. These practices protect and regenerate soil, water, and air quality, improve biodiversity and protect sensitive habitats, and increase the productivity and profitability of farms. Farmers are also adopting technological innovations such as biodigesters to convert manure into renewable natural gas or the use of precision agriculture agritech solutions to reduce nitrogen fertilizer emissions, as part of the low carbon economy. Together, regenerative agriculture practices and agritech are addressing the need to proactively respond to climate change through practical mitigation and adaptation tactics.

Key Strategies

- Increase available cost-share funding for beneficial management practices through CleanBC.
- Expand research and innovation on beneficial management practices with an emphasis on regenerative practices and sequestration of carbon in the soil.
- Stimulate growth and development of innovation and new technologies that will enhance soil, water and greenhouse agricultural production and food processing sectors.
- Through the B.C. Centre for Agritech and Innovation, support agritech businesses to expand, grow, and meet the progressive needs of primary agricultural production and food processors while ensuring British Columbians' world-class sustainability, quality and safety standards continue.

Discussion

Farmers receive cost-share funding from the Ministry for completing beneficial management practice projects, many of which promote regenerative agriculture practices and technologies. An increased number of such projects indicate the Ministry's success at supporting the

development of the agritech sector and promoting regenerative agriculture practices.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2021/22 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2a Number of beneficial management practice projects completed by farmers which support regenerative agriculture practices and technologies	200	450	550	700	850

Data source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Discussion

2a Beneficial Management Practices: Beneficial management practices are tracked by the delivery of beneficial management practice projects through various funding programs. These projects are implemented and adopted by individual farmers and producers. These practices contribute to regenerative agriculture production, indicating a shift in on-farm production to include more regenerative agriculture practices. Cumulative growth in the volume of beneficial management practice projects implemented over time indicates the prevalence of adoption, ongoing use, and rate of transition to beneficial management practices.

Goal 3: Support the agriculture, food and beverage sector in growing and diversifying domestic and international markets.

The Ministry is working to support the sector to expand and diversify domestic and international markets through the delivery of a suite of market development programs and services. By helping to increase sales and diversify markets, the Ministry supports the sector's ability to contribute to sustainable and resilient economic growth for the province.

Objective 3.1: Increase the capacity of the B.C. agriculture, food and beverage sector to expand domestic and international competitiveness.

Leveraging B.C.'s agriculture, food and beverage sector's competitive advantages, addressing barriers to growth and building capacity to capitalize on market opportunities will enable business and job growth.

Key Strategies

- Deliver trade diversification seminars for the agriculture, food and beverage sector to assist them in understanding market requirements, opportunities and challenges specific to key international markets.
- Provide market research services and cost-shared funding to industry associations to support their ability to conduct market research and establish market development and diversification plans.
- Support the development of a coordinated long-term market development strategy and short-term sales and marketing plan for BC's apple industry, in alignment with the goals and objectives of [The Path Forward: A Blueprint for B.C.'s Tree Fruit Industry](#).
- Increase B.C. processing innovation, productivity and competitiveness through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, training, technical services and other supports including through the B.C. Food Hub Network.

Discussion

The sector's competitiveness is dependent upon a wide range of factors that drive economic productivity, market development and ultimately growth. As a sector primarily comprised of small to medium-size businesses, the first step to improving competitiveness is increasing capacity and awareness of opportunities, informing actions through market research and planning, and preparing companies to meet market requirements. Targeted export readiness activities are anticipated to support the sector to identify and pursue market development opportunities both abroad and domestically.

Expanding market opportunities will require additional actions to address barriers to growth. Food Hubs, already found in twelve communities around the province, help food entrepreneurs overcome barriers to growth by providing access to shared equipment. As food and beverage manufacturing account for 60 percent of B.C.'s total agriculture, food, and

