

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF)
Estimates 2021
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Updated April 2021

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Accomplishments

Updated: March 26, 2021

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Ministry Highlights

- Budget for 2020/21 - \$95.4 million (\$13.9M more than previous government)
- 2019 farm cash receipts - \$3.9 billion (\$462M or 13% increase over 2018)
- 2019 B.C. Farmers' Net Cash Income - \$560 million (\$441 million or 27% increase over 2018)
- 2019 revenues for agriculture, seafood and food processing - \$15.5 billion (7% increase over 2018)
- 2019 international exports - \$4.7 billion (7% increase over 2018)
- 2019 food and beverage sales - \$10.5 billion
- 2019 increases in supply managed sectors include:
 - Beef up 10% (\$25.2 million increase)
 - Nursery up 9% (\$14.5 million increase)
 - Grapes up 8% (\$5.6 million increase)
 - Field vegetables including mushrooms up 5% (\$17.5 million increase)
- 2019 total workforce for agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sectors – 64,100 (1,100 new jobs created in 2019)

BC Food Hub Network

- 12 food hubs announced and are either in operation or in development:
- Vancouver – Commissary Connect
- Surrey – Plenty & Grace
- Port Alberni – The Dock+
- Quesnel
- Salmon Arm
- Abbotsford
- Kamloops
- Creston
- Kootenay-Boundary (Rock Creek/Greenwood)
- Victoria
- Cowichan Valley
- Bowser

- **Total funding: \$8.3 million**

- **Good news validators:**

- Canadian Barley Tea Company
- Cascadia Seaweed
- Field House Brewing
- Local Pulse
- Eat Island Grown

Additional Info:

- Food Hubs provide small and medium businesses with shared food processing and innovation space, equipment, and business support services.
- Food Hubs help increase the volume of food grown and processed locally; create more demand for ingredients from local farmers; increase the number of people employed locally; address food safety and food security issues; and build community connections.
- Each food hub is unique, and the needs of the communities the hubs will be operating in are diverse.
- The Commissary Connect Food Hub has its own integrated technology platform including a pay-as-you-go system which helps manage booking, billing and contract and client management for their facility.

- With this technology platform, food hubs can bill clients for equipment-use by the hour, allowing small businesses to pay for what they use and not worry about having their revenue tied up in weekly or monthly facility rental fees.
- We are currently funding a pilot of Commissary Connect's technology platform at three of the food hubs (Port Alberni, Surrey, Quesnel).
- The technology will be customized and implemented to support the unique models and needs of each hub.

Feed BC

- Implemented in three health authorities:
 - Interior Health
 - Fraser Health
 - Northern Health
- Implemented in nine post-secondary institutions:
 - British Columbia Institute of Technology
 - Camosun College
 - Selkirk College
 - Simon Fraser University
 - Thompson Rivers University
 - University of British Columbia
 - University of the Fraser Valley
 - University of Northern British Columbia
 - Vancouver Community College

Additional info:

- In 2018-19, the first year of Feed BC, over 27% of the food served by health authorities was B.C. food, defined as a final product produced and/or processed within the geographic borders of B.C.
- In 2019-20, this increased to over 30% representing a \$3.5 million increase in B.C. food expenditures.

- The nine post-secondary institutions have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food.
- **Good news validators:**
 - Michell's Farm (Saanich)
 - Daybreak Farms (Terrace)
 - Westberry Farms (Fraser Valley)
 - S&G Farms (Oliver)
 - Linden Lane Farms (Krestova, Central Kootenay)
 - Golden Ears Cheesecrafters (Maple Ridge)
 - Hallmark Poultry (Vancouver)
 - Homesteader Meats (Prince George)

Buy BC

- Buy BC Partnership Program - \$2 million annually
- Program allows B.C. companies to use free Buy BC logo and supports industry-led marketing campaigns which can help increase domestic sales.
- Over 500 companies now use Buy BC logo.
- 116 industry-led marketing projects have been funded since 2018.

- Partnered with Thrifty Foods and Safeway to promote B.C. products in-store in over 40 communities.
- Buy BC e-commerce program - \$550,000 one-time funding in 2020 as part of COVID-19 response
- Program helped farmers and food and beverage processors pivot their sales model so they could develop and market online sales.
- **Good news validators:**
 - Walcan Seafood (e-commerce)
 - Jenny Marie's Cracker Company (e-commerce)
 - Sheringham Distillery (partnership program)
 - Little Creek Dressing (partnership program)

Farmers Markets:

- Partnering with the BC Association of Farmers Markets to help them pivot to an online model.
- Total funding - \$55,000 over two years.
- Over 70 farmers markets launched an online virtual store in 2020 generating over \$2.5 million in sales.
- BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon program available in 79 communities and helped over 6,000 households in 2020.

- **Good news validators:**

- BC Association of Farmers Markets
- Bird Tree Urban Farm Flower Store (Revelstoke)
- Hooks and Jars (Gabriola Island)

Grow BC

BC Land Matching Program

- Program has supported 109 farmland matches between new farmers and landowners bringing 2000 hectares (5000 acres) of B.C. farmland into production.
- Land matches by region:
 - Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley (33)
 - Vancouver Island (33)
 - Okanagan (26)
 - Columbia Basin (7)
 - Central and Northern BC (10).
- **Total funding:** over \$1 million since 2018 (\$300,000 in 2018/2019, \$375,000 in 2019/2020, and \$390,000 in 2020/2021)

- **Good news validators:**

- Sara Dent, executive director, Young Agrarians
- Rake and Radish Farm (Saanich)
- Old Tower Farm (Okanagan)

Additional info:

- Apart from Quebec, B.C. is the only Province or territory in Canada to support regional land matching services.

Small Farm Business Acceleration Pilot Program (part of Stronger BC)

- Provides funding to small and new farmers for business plan coaching, as well as cost-shared funding for commercial farm infrastructure and equipment, to increase productivity and sales.

- **Total funding: \$800,000**

- **Good news validators:**

- Old Ochiltree Ranch (150 Mile House)
- Farmer Cam's Foods (Skeena Valley)

Additional info:

- One-year pilot is supporting 64 small and new farmers in 54 different communities.
- Includes seven Indigenous-owned and operated agricultural businesses and 19 new farmers under the age of 35 and 13 female entrepreneurs.

Youth Agriculture

- Provided funding to 4H BC, including annual commitment as well as for youth farm safety and outreach program to support underrepresented groups.
- **Total funding:** \$153,000 (2020)
- \$25,000 to help grow the B.C. Agriculture in the Classroom's Take a Bite out of B.C. program (2020).
- Dedicated youth development team who create opportunities to increase youth awareness of B.C. agriculture.
- **Good news validators:**
 - 4 H BC

Securing Labour

Temporary Foreign Workers

- Provincial quarantine program
- Province funding hotel, food services, health screening, wellness walks, laundry, interpretation and translation services and other necessary supports for TFW 14-day quarantine period.
- **Total funding:** \$17 million for 2020
- **Good news validators:**
 - Mexican Consul General
 - BC Agriculture Council
 - Galey's Farm

Additional info:

- Of the 5,000 TFWs who arrived between April 13 and December 31st, 2020, 64 COVID-19 positive cases were detected, and all recovered while under the care and supervision of the quarantine program.
- B.C. also established protocols, provided guidelines, and continue to conduct inspections at on-farm accommodations and work sites before workers arrive.

- In total, 500 farms and over 600 farm sites (some farms have more than one site), were inspected and received workers in 2020.
- All farms receiving workers in 2021 require inspection regardless of past inspections completed in 2020.

Domestic Workers

- Province secured and provided funding for safe campgrounds, on-farm sanitation and PPE and education around COVID-19 protocols for domestic workers travelling to Okanagan from other parts of Canada.
- **Total funding:** \$423,000 used in 2020 (\$1.6M allotment)
- **Good news validators:**
 - Jealous Fruits (David Geen)
 - Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake Economic Action Partnership

Additional info:

- A COVID-19 Awareness for Fruit Pickers in B.C. course, developed by AgSafe BC, was required for workers to stay at designated campsites and/or pick fruit. AgSafe estimates that approximately 1,000 people have taken the course online or in-person.
- There were no documented COVID outbreaks at these campgrounds in 2020.

BC Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector

- New website making it easier for employers and employees to connect to fill vacancies and get more British Columbians working to put fresh and local food on our tables.
- Stats since launch in late May 2020:
 - Over 256,000 views
 - Highest viewed position are farm jobs – over 68,000 views
 - Highest viewed regions for job opportunities are in the Lower Mainland, followed by the Okanagan, Vancouver Island and the Kootenays.
 - Thousands of new jobs posted by industry

Cattle/Beef

- BC Cattlemen's Association Grant (Stronger BC)
- Funding to support the development of a new beef processing facility in Westwold.

- **Total funding:** \$1,000,000

- Bred Heifer Association Loan Guarantee Program (Co-funded with the AAFC)
- Funding has helped to expand the loan guarantee amount.

- **Total Funding:** \$600,000

- **Good news validators:**
 - Kevin Boon, General manger, BC Cattlemen's Association

Livestock/Meat Production Sector

- Increased opportunities for more local meat sales in retail and restaurants in Alberni Valley, Central Kootenays and Robson Valley by expanding Class D licences.
- Supporting rural abattoirs through an updated, training program that focusses on improved food safety and animal welfare (SlaughterRight)
- Working on regulatory changes to modernize meat production in B.C. which will include:
 - increased inspections
 - new and improved inspection models to encourage more livestock and poultry production and processing in B.C.
 - new, simplified and graduated meat licensing categories to allow more small-scale producers to be licenced with ability to sell products to farmers markets and restaurants provincewide.
- BC Food Processors Association
- Funding to develop and launch food safety and animal welfare training workshops for producers, processors and regional health inspectors.
- **Total Funding: \$290,000**

- BC Abattoir association
- Funding to provide humane slaughter training, food safety and sanitation procedures for Class A and B abattoirs.

- **Total Funding: \$148,000**

Additional info:

- Ranchers in the Cariboo-Chilcotin received help feeding their livestock through assistance from the B.C. government following forage loss due to flooding in the summer and fall 2019.

- **Good news validators:**
 - Tristan Banwell, rancher, Class D licence holder and vice president of the Small-Scale Meat Producers Association.
 - Collin Van Horne, Nighthawk Ridge Farms, Port Alberni

Chicken/Egg/Poultry Sector

- In 2020, British Columbians led the country in the growth of table egg sales.
- Chicken was one of the top 10 commodities in terms of farm cash receipts in B.C. in 2019.
- In 2019, the processed meat and poultry products sector brought in \$1.9 billion.
- 600,000 shelled eggs procured (as of Aug. 29, 2019) for Interior Health Feed BC implementation.
- **Good news validator:**
 - Sunrise farms (chicken)
 - Daybreak Farms (eggs)
 - S&G Farms (Oliver)
 - Golden Valley Eggs (Abbotsford)

Dairy Sector

- Dairy sector saw an increase in farm cash receipts of \$47 million in 2019 (7.5% increase).

Bees/Pollinators

- Proclaimed May 29th Day of the Honeybee since 2018.
- Bee BC program provides funding to smaller-scale community-based projects that support the health of B.C.'s bees.
- **Total funding since 2018: \$280,000**
- 62 Bee BC projects have been funded to-date and the latest round of funding opened in January 2021.
- Bee technology transfer program - \$100,000 investment (2021), includes setting up a research apiary and helping to coordinate research and education to build sustainability.

- **Good news validators:**

- Kerry Clark, president, BC Honey Producers Association
- Darcy Kaltio, affiliate member, Blueberry Commons Farm Cooperative, Bee BC funding recipient, 2020
- Peter Awram, Worker Bee Honey Company, attended Day of the Honey Bee in 2019, spoke about developing a B.C. honey purity database

Additional info:

- Bees play a major role in agriculture as pollinators of crops, contributing an estimated \$550 million to the economy in British Columbia, and over \$2 billion across Canada.
- B.C.'s beekeeping industry totaled an estimated \$18.8 million in farm receipts in 2020 of the sale of hive products and pollination services.
- In 2019, bees in B.C. produced more than 1.77 million kilograms of honey, a 24% increase from 2018.

Aquaculture & Seafood Sector

- Supporting healthy oceans and stocks through:
 - \$143M (\$42M from B.C.) over 5 years for the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund to restore fish habitat and protect vulnerable wild Pacific salmon (2019).
 - As of March 2021, 42 BCSRIF projects have been funded, accounting for \$71M
 - \$5M to Pacific Salmon Foundation to support their work (2019)
 - \$75,000 to support study of Pacific salmon stock abundance in Gulf of Alaska (2019)
- **Good news validators:** Michael Meneer, Pacific Salmon Foundation president and CEO
- Supporting Aquaculture in B.C. through:
 - B.C.'s first ever Aquaculture Innovation Challenge which awards \$325k in prizes to new technology and funding innovations that solve challenges faced by aquaculture (2021).

- Shellfish Industry Opportunity Assessment: Committed \$75K to assess opportunities for increasing capacity and profitability to help build a stronger, more resilient, sustainable industry.
- Working directly with the Coastal First Nations through a provincial Memorandum of Understanding for the development of a northern shellfish aquaculture strategy.
- \$1.3M BC Oyster Recovery Fund, to assist with re-seeding efforts & support research on marine norovirus travel patterns (2018).
- \$250K from the fund to support three research projects on natural organisms that can cause illness from the consumption of raw oysters (2019)
- \$225,000 from Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program to support a greener fisheries and aquaculture industry (2018-2020).
- \$10,000 per year to support B.C. Young Fisherman's Gathering (2018-2021).

Indigenous

- Initiated Indigenous Advisory Group on Agriculture in 2019 to provide strategic advice to support the success of Indigenous communities and businesses in land-based agriculture.
- Indigenous Agriculture team has 3 staff who support First Nations and Métis communities and entrepreneurs in the development and growth of their agriculture and food business initiatives.
- B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program: \$176,900 (CAP Funding) started in 2018.
- Supports Indigenous governments, communities and organizations assess how they can develop farm businesses and food security
- Program helps Indigenous entrepreneurs, Indigenous governments, communities, Tribal Councils, economic development corporations with specialized planning and coaching services to develop and plan their food and agricultural businesses.
- \$63,000 (CAP funding) to 4-H BC for specialized programs focused on urban and Indigenous youth. In 2020/21, supplemented with \$25,000 in additional funding for research and special initiatives.
- **Good news validator:** Chief Willie Sellars, Williams Lake First Nation.

Broughton

- Our historic, government-to-government talks with First Nations in the Broughton produced a way to address nations' longstanding concerns and protect and restore wild salmon stocks.
- The 'Namgis, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis, and Mamalilikulla First Nations are restoring habitat and monitoring salmon farms in the Broughton area.
- Orderly transition underway for open net pen finfish operations in the Broughton area, creating a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.

- **Total funding:** \$13.5 million for Broughton Implementation Package.

- **Good news validators:**
 - Chief Don Svanvik, 'Namgis First Nation
 - Chief Robert Chamberlin, Elected Chief Councillor of the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation

Additional info:

- In Dec. 2018, The Nations, along with Cermaq Canada and Mowi Canada West, reached a landmark agreement establishing First Nations' oversight of salmon farms operating in their territories during the orderly transition of salmon farms in the area over four years.
- The transition has commenced with the decommissioning of five salmon farms. By the end of 2022, 10 farms in total will have ceased operations.
- The remaining seven farms will continue to operate under the agreement until 2023, when if no agreement has been reached between the Nations and the salmon farming industry, or if there are no valid DFO licenses in place, they will also cease operations.

Climate Action

- \$6M from 2018 to 2023 to help farmers and ranchers prepare and adapt to changing climate and weather conditions (CAP funding).
- Regional adaptation strategies developed or underway in eight key agricultural areas:
 - Delta
 - Peace
 - Cariboo
 - Fraser Valley
 - Okanagan
 - Kootenay & Boundary
 - Bulkley-Nechako & Fraser-Fort George
 - Vancouver Island
- Boosted the Beneficial Management Practices Program with an additional \$800,000, which supports farmers in taking steps to better protect the air, land and water, and aligns with government's CleanBC climate goals.

Good News Validator:

- Arzeena Hamir, owner of Amara Farm and vice-chair of the Comox Valley Regional District Board of Directors.

Additional info:

- Over 80 projects funded, addressing climate related risks such as drought, excess moisture, flooding, pests, diseases, and wildfires identified in the strategies.
- 20 projects in progress in 2020/21.
- The ministry is also funding 12 collaborative applied research projects to pilot and demonstrate innovative adaptation practices on B.C. farms and ranches.

Business Risk Management

- Provide more than \$40 million, in a typical year, to B.C. producers through the various insurance and income protection programs the ministry operates.
- B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program - increased compensation rate by 14% for B.C. farmers and ranchers providing additional \$9 million over two years (Fiscal 2020 and 2021).
- Farmers enrolled are now eligible to receive a much higher interim payment, meaning they get more money earlier, when they need it most.
- **Good news validators:**
 - BC Agriculture Council chair Stan Vander Waal
 - BC Cattlemen's Association general manager Kevin Boon

- Ranchers in the Cariboo-Chilcotin received help feeding their livestock through assistance from the B.C. government following forage loss due to flooding in the summer and fall 2019.
- **Good news validator:**
 - Cordy Cox, president, Cariboo Cattlemen's Association

Additional info:

- Our government established the B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program in 2019 which provides increased protection for farmers who have lost income due to weather, extreme market-price fluctuations or natural disaster.
- By increasing the compensation rate from 70% to 80%, every claim is increased by 14.3%.
- 2019 BC Forage and Transportation Assistance Initiative provided assistance (\$45.50 per ton of hay) towards the purchase of additional hay for Cariboo ranchers who had to purchase more than they normally would due to flooding in late 2019.

Animal Welfare

- Supported high-quality care for animals to help organizations cover the costs of food and medicine for their animals during COVID-19.
 - 24 applicants received \$4.2 million
 - \$1.4 million to SPCA
 - \$1.8 million to Vancouver Aquarium
 - Other recipients include:
 - Langley Animal Protection Society (LAPS)
 - Wildlife Rescue Association (Burnaby, serves lower mainland)
 - Prince George Humane Society
- In 2019, turned the National Farm Animal Care Council Codes of Practice into law in B.C.
- The Codes outline generally accepted management practices for livestock and farm animal operators, and their employees, including requirements for animal handling, feed and water, housing, health and welfare management, and other husbandry practices.
- 11 Codes include: dairy, beef, bison, equines, farmed mink and fox, pigs, rabbits, sheep, veal cattle, and the poultry sector.

Additional info:

- New website making it easier for employers and employees to connect to fill vacancies and get more British Columbians working to put fresh and local food on our tables.
- The B.C. government is supporting the BC SPCA's capacity to address animal welfare in the poultry and livestock sectors by funding training specific to farmed animal operations.
- B.C. has among the strongest penalties in Canada for animal distress. Charges under B.C.'s Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act can be laid against anyone who causes suffering or distress to an animal in B.C., including owners, managers and employees in the agriculture sector.
- Maximum penalties under B.C. legislation for those convicted of causing animal distress is \$75,000 and up to 24 months imprisonment.

Tree Fruit Sector

- Supported the tree fruit industry with over \$35 million in the last three years:
 - Approximately \$21 million in production insurance
 - Approximately \$7 million through AgriStability Enhancement Program
 - \$3 million for Tree Fruit Replant Program
 - \$5 million for Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund
- **Good news validator:**
 - BC Tree Fruits Cooperative

Additional info:

- The tree fruit industry is composed of approximately 800 growers managing 14,500 acres of tree fruit crops in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Creston Valleys.
- More than one million trees have been planted since 2017.

Nut Sector

- Hazelnut Renewal Program Funding (2018)
- Program is revitalizing the B.C. hazelnut sector, the passionate people working in their orchards and those looking to start a career in agriculture.
- **Total funding:** \$300,000 over three years (2018-2021)
- **Good news validator:**
 - Neal teBrink, president, BC Hazelnut Growers Association

Additional info:

- In the first two years of the Hazelnut Renewal program, 18,444 new trees were planted over 34 hectares (94 acres). At the same time, 4,795 infected trees were removed over 17 hectares (42 acres).
- The B.C. hazelnut industry is comprised of approximately 40 growers with about 141 hectares (350 acres).

Wine Sector

- B.C Wine Month – declared every April since 2018
- Buy BC funding to promote B.C. wines
 - \$377,000 in cost-shared funding to 14 wine organizations for local market development projects (Buy BC partnership program).
 - \$153,000 to 34 wine organizations to help businesses pivot during COVID-19 (Buy BC e-commerce program).
 - \$75,000 to Wine Growers of B.C. to support its “Celebrating 30 Years of B.C. VQA” project and an additional \$18,000 to support development of their 2021-2023 B.C. Wine Export Strategy. (Buy BC partnership program).
- Annual marketing support from BCLDB - \$440,000
- Launched four new Geographical Indications (2018):
 - Thompson Valley
 - Shuswap
 - Lillooet
 - Kootenays

- Launched new sub-appellations to build local brands and connect more people to local wine:
 - Okanagan Falls (2018)
 - Naramata Bench and Skaha Bench (2019)
 - Cowichan Valley (2020)
- **Good news validator:**
 - Miles Prodan, CEO and president, Wine Growers British Columbia (validator for Buy BC as well, Wine Growers BC received \$74.9k in 2020/21)
 - Laurie Barnes, Sales & Marketing Director, Poplar Grove Winery Inc. (Buy BC funding recipient, \$44.4K in 2020/21)
 - Erin Korpisto, Sales & Marketing Manager, Stag's Hollow Winery (Buy BC funding recipient, \$39.4K in 2020/21)

Additional info:

- B.C. is home to 929 vineyards, 340 land-based wineries and 72 commercial wineries.
- Of B.C.'s 370 licensed wineries, 284 are grape wineries, and 86 are fruit wineries.

- B.C.'s wine industry employs approximately 12,000 people and has an economic impact of \$2.8 billion annually.
- Combined sales from B.C. breweries, wineries and distilleries amounted to \$1.42 billion in 2019, up 10.7% from 2018.

Seed Sector

- Funding BC Seed Hub feasibility study to determine potential of adding in-hub infrastructure or mobile cleaning units at food hubs (study led by **FarmFolk CityFolk**).
- \$670,000 through the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund to Kwantlen Polytechnic University.
- Funding has helped support purchase of seed testing equipment for the newly renovated seed lab, as well as farm infrastructure for the university's research farm.
- **Good news validators:**
 - David Catzel, BC Seed Security Program Manager, FarmFolk CityFolk
 - Anita Gregory, executive director, FarmFolk CityFolk

