



# **Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**

## **2022/2023 Estimates Binder**

The Honourable Lana Popham,  
Minister

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**  
**Estimates 2022**  
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## Introduction

- I'd like to begin by welcoming the Opposition Critic and I'm looking forward to being able to talk about Budget 22 and the progress our government is making on strengthening our food system and food economy while helping our farmers and producers do what they do best.
  
- I'm joined in person by:
  - Peter Pokorny, Deputy Minister
  - Ranbir Parmar, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer for the Natural Resource ministries.
  - Kim Grout, CEO of the ALC
  
- And I'm also being supported by:
  - Arif Lalani, Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture Resource Division
  - Jennifer McGuire, Assistant Deputy Minister, Science, Policy and Inspection Division
  - Shawna Lyttle, Manager of Executive Operation in the Deputy Minister's Office.
  
- And I want to thank the hard-working staff in my ministry who helped prepare us for estimates and who do great work every day to support the agriculture and food sector in B.C.

## Thank you to farmers

- B.C. farmers, fishers and food processors have had a tough time due to the global pandemic and the extreme climate change-related weather that ravaged our province.
- I've been fortunate to have the chance to thank many of them in person for their perseverance and resilience through these tough times.
- But I want to reiterate how much I appreciate them and admire their optimism and hopefulness.
- Their support for one another, especially during the flooding, was extremely moving and I can't thank them enough.

## **Budget 22 – overall government narrative**

- Over the last two years, British Columbians have been challenged by both an unprecedented pandemic and disastrous climate-related weather events such as November’s record flooding.
- The investments our government is making – whether it be in health care, child care, housing, climate change or emergency management – are important building blocks that will support British Columbians.
- As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, our government is focused on helping people and businesses get back on their feet and ensuring we have a strong economic recovery.
- Through Budget 2022, we’re building an even stronger B.C. and making life better for people by investing in our province’s economic, environmental, and social strengths.
- And that includes continuing to build our province’s food security and food economy.

## **Ministry's budget overview**

- Despite the setbacks farmers faced from the pandemic and extreme weather, the sector posted record revenues in 2020 of over \$16 billion...creating millions of meals and supporting jobs in many communities as well as our provincial economy while doing so.
- This proves just how resilient the industry is and how successful BC food producers were at adapting and pivoting their business models.
- And Budget 22 will help that record growth continue, with an 8% increase to the Ministry from the year before, bringing the Ministry of Agriculture's budget over \$100 million for the first time to \$107 million.
- This represents an over \$25 million increase in the ministry's budget since our government was elected in 2017 and shows we are serious about supporting our hard-working farming families and those who put food and drink on the tables of BC families.

## **Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC**

- The ministry will continue to provide the help our farm businesses need to grow, through funding and support for our three key pillars: Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC.
- We are helping farmers begin or expand operations through Grow BC.
  - The BC Land Matching Program has supported over 180 farmland matches bringing over 8,800 acres into production.
  - And those numbers are about real people producing real food:
  - Like Okanagan farmer Kanver Brares, who comes from a long line of farmers and orchardists.
  - He grew up on his family's orchard and after completing a business degree, his heart led him back to his roots in agriculture.
  - Brares was matched to long-time organic apple orchardists Alain Peron and Donna Bartlett in Keremeos and is now carrying on the legacy of Old Tower Farm that has been built over the last 25 years.

- We are also increasing institutional purchasing of BC foods in places like hospitals and universities and supporting food entrepreneurs around the province through Feed BC.
  - Approximately 30% of food served by BC Health Authorities and post-secondary institutions is produced or processed locally...
  - Some like Okanagan College are already at 38% locally sourced produce, meat and dairy.
  - And the range of food suppliers and products is truly impressive.
  - One example is Goodly Foods. They are a Vancouver company that uses surplus produce – like vegetables that might not look perfect, or are in oversupply, and turn them into soups and stews.
  - They started production using one of the food hubs in our provincial network, and now have their products served in hospitals and health facilities meals.
  - It's one example of how our government is making a difference, to British Columbian farmers, businesses, and people receiving care.

- We also continue to make it easier for British Columbians who want to support local farms, through Buy BC.
  - Over 720 companies now use the Buy BC logo – this is creating new opportunities for companies like Vancouver’s Kindred Cultures, who have entered new markets and have seen a 30% increase in sales since partnering with Buy BC.

### **Building a stronger environment for our future**

- From heat domes to wildfires, from droughts to floods – 2021 was a year that BC farmers were happy to see end.
- The damages experienced by BC farmers were immense, and unlike anything we have ever seen before.
- And our agricultural response to the flooding emergency is also the largest in our province’s history – our work with the federal government led to \$228 million being available to help BC farmers in flood effected areas return to production.
- I’m pleased to let you know we’ve had 310 applications so far with 55 approved payments totaling \$8 million, some of that money is already flowing to farmers and more is on the way.
- And that follows the \$20 million in support to help ranchers and farmers recover from wildfires and drought last summer.

- 2021 is now behind us and the over \$240 million in recovery funding stresses the urgent need we all face to adapt to climate change, and Budget 22 is helping make that happen.
- This budget also provides new funding to the Ministry, with \$5 million to help farmers reduce emissions and \$3 million to help develop more climate resilient practices on their farms.
- This work will supplement the Ministry's on-going partnership with the federal government and the BC Climate Action Initiative to develop region-specific climate adaptation strategies...and will help protect people, our food supply, and our communities from climate-related disasters.

## **Agritech**

- Budget 22 will also support BC farmers adopt and use new innovations and techniques to produce the food we rely on.
- The future of farming in B.C. is one that uses technology to maximize food production, and one that will see the farming landscape begin to change to include more things like vertical farming, which will create new opportunities to produce more food and more valuable food products.
- Agritech has the potential to increase yields, product quality, climate change adaptation and food security while limiting exposure to insects and disease, and that is something this government and this budget fully support.

- By fostering a balance that promotes traditional agriculture, food processing, and agritech businesses to grow, we can ensure a resilient and competitive agriculture and food sector that feeds B.C. families and employs BC workers.
- And we're seeing examples of that, like TechBrew Robotics in Salmon Arm who have developed a vision-guided robot to pick mushrooms and pack them in boxes, providing a potential solution to farms that are short of workers.
- It is a BC tech solution, but this innovation is also catching the interest of companies globally with one of the leading international mushroom companies from the Netherlands piloting this advanced technology.
- And there's also Lucent Biosciences in Vancouver, working to transform livestock waste into a non-polluting, safe, high-performance fertilizer.
- These innovations are showing much potential and we look forward to seeing future developments from the many forward-thinking companies that we are home to here in B.C.
- These types of developments, and a future with more like them, will be crucial not only to ensuring food security, but also for lasting prosperity and a growing food economy for British Columbians.

## RAAN

- As I've mentioned, one reason the support for Budget 22 is so widespread amongst British Columbians, is because it is working to sustain our province's environment, food security and economy.
- And one of the ways we're doing that at the Ministry of Agriculture is through the Regenerative Agriculture and Agri-tech Network, or RAAN in short.
- We started this network last year, and it will help advance our government's climate change goals by maximizing the environmental benefits and the carbon-sequestering potential of regenerative agricultural practices.
- The concept of regenerative agriculture is developing the sustainable production of food, and the stewardship of the land that provides it, and 2022 is going to be a big year for the network.
- Just consider what local company Terramera is doing.
- They are a global agritech leader fusing science, nature and artificial intelligence to transform how food is grown
- Terramera develops high-performance, plant-based pest control and crop protection products with the goal of helping farmers grow affordable, clean food for everyone.

- Some of their operations include research labs, greenhouses and demonstration farms – and they’ve been successful in patenting over 200 proprietary technologies that aim to answer the question: "How can we use technology to unlock the intelligence in nature, to ensure an earth that thrives and provides for everyone?"
- And RAAN will be working to help answer that question too.
- It will engage agricultural leaders and pioneers from around our province, and encourage farming practices that will increase environmental sustainability, mitigate the effects of climate change, and increase productivity and profitability.

## **Conclusion**

- Once again, this is another record budget for the ministry.
- It is one that will help protect people, like our farmers, and communities from climate-related disasters....and help British Columbia advance our food security and strengthen our food economy
- All of which are part of our government’s larger plan to build on our strengths and be prepared for the challenges – and opportunities – of tomorrow.

# **Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Accomplishments**

**Updated: January 14, 2022**

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## **Ministry Highlights**

- Budget for 2022/23 - \$107 million (\$8M more than 2021/22 and over \$25 M more than previous government)
- 2020 farm cash receipts - \$4.03 billion (\$88M or 2% increase over 2019)
- 2020 total net income for farmers - \$150.7 million (increase of 34% or \$37.5 million from 2019).
- 2020 revenues for agriculture, seafood and food processing - \$16.1 billion (3.3% increase over 2019)
- 2020 international exports - \$4.8 billion (\$100M or 2% increase over 2019)
- 2020 food and beverage sales - \$11.1 billion (5.5% increase over 2019)
- 2020 total workforce for agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sectors – 68,200 (approx. 500 new jobs created in 2020)

## **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 piloted a technology platform which the ministry funded to help manage booking and billing.
- Eight other hubs are in the process of trying different tech tools that best match and support the unique models and needs of each hub.

## **Feed BC**

- Implemented in all health authorities.
- Implemented in 20 of B.C.'s 25 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
  - University of Victoria
  - Capilano University
  - Okanagan College
  - Vancouver Island University
  - Royal Roads
  - Douglas College
  - Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
  - Coast Mountain College
  - College of New Caledonia
  - Kwantlen Polytechnic University
  - Langara 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.
- Post-secondary institutions have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food. Okanagan College is already at 38% locally sourced produce, meat and dairy.

- **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)
- Colonial Farms (Armstrong)
- Bonanza Meats (Kelowna)

## **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 720 companies now use Buy BC logo.
- 242 industry-led marketing projects have been funded since 2018; this includes the 69 active projects for the 2021-22 funding cycle.
- Partnered with Thrifty Foods and Safeway to promote B.C. products in-store in over 40 communities.
- Distributed 8,700 Buy BC signs to Thrifty Foods and Safeway stores to increase visibility and sales of BC products.
- 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 with an additional \$1.4 million in 2021.
- BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon program helped 4,914 households (14,104 recipients) across 86 communities in 2021.
  
- **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 182 farmland matches between new farmers and landholders bringing 3,577 hectares (8,841 acres) of B.C. farmland into production.
- Land matches by region:
  - Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley (45)
  - Vancouver Island (52)
  - Okanagan (7)
  - Columbia Basin (13)
  - Central and Northern BC (12)
- **Total funding:** over \$1.4 million since 2018 (\$300k in 2018/2019, \$375k in 2019/2020, and \$390k in 2020/2021 and 2021/22)
- **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 to support regional land matching services.

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

- Provided 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 supported 64 small and new farmers in 54 different communities.
- Included 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, annual commitment to engage youth in agriculture, farm safety and outreach program to support underrepresented groups.
- 4-H BC
  - \$87,000 annual base funded grant.
  - \$42,000 20/21 CAP funding dispersed in March.
  - \$23,000 21/22 CAP funding (dispersed in Sept).
- BC Agriculture in the Classroom
  - \$12,500 funding through the Indigenous Funding Envelope for the new “Uncovering Common Ground” program.
- Public Health Association of BC (Farm to School BC Program)
  - \$12,500 funding through the Indigenous Funding Envelope for a new “Land Based Learning” toolkit for educators.
- **Total funding:** \$264k over past two years
- **Good news validators:**
  - 4 H BC

## **ALR – residential flexibility**

- Put new rules in place to allow ALR property owners increased housing flexibility, helping farmers and non-farmers support their families and businesses in their communities.
- As of Dec. 31, 2021, approval for a small secondary residence is only needed from local or First Nations government and not the ALC.
- New options include but not limited to: garden suite, guest house, accommodation over existing building, manufactured home.
- Housing can be used for things such as: agritourism, family needs, succession planning, farm labour, or supplementary income from rental.
- As previously allowed, applications for larger secondary homes can be made to the ALC.
- **Good news validators:**
  - UBCM
  - Katie Underwood, Owner, Peas n' Carrots Farm

## **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
  - \$35 million for 2021
- **Good news validators:**
  - Mexican Consul General
  - BC Agriculture Council
  - Galey's Farm

### **Additional info:**

- In 2021, approximately 9300 TFWs arrived with about 100 COVID cases detected while workers were in the quarantine program.
- 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, over 600 farms and over 900 farm sites (some farms have more than one site), were inspected and received workers in 2021.

### **Domestic Workers**

- Province provided funding for safe campgrounds, on-farm sanitation and PPE and education around COVID-19 protocols for domestic workers travelling to Okanagan from other provinces in each of the last two years.
- **Total funding:**
  - \$423,000 used in 2020 (\$1.6M budget)
  - \$652,000 in 2021
- **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.
- There were no documented COVID outbreaks at these campgrounds.

### **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 281,000 views.
  - Highest viewed position are farm jobs – over 74,640 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)
  - Supports sector associations and member ranchers purchase livestock, expand operations, and increase investment in the industry by guaranteeing a portion of their loans from commercial lenders.
  - The program allows cattle producers to collectively purchase feeder cattle and bred heifers at more favourable terms than they could obtain as individuals.
  - Max Provincial Loan Guarantee is \$15 million.
  - There are currently four feeder and four bred heifer associations that in total can access up to \$74M in loan guarantees from private sector lenders.
  - **Total Funding:** \$600,000
- 
- **Good news validators:**
    - Kevin Boon, General manger, BC Cattlemen’s Association

## **Livestock/Meat Production Sector**

- Increased opportunities for small-scale producers to sell local meat products in retail shops, farmers markets and restaurants.
- New, simplified meat licensing system will support increased food production, and regional food security, as well as stimulate local economies and prioritize food safety.
  - Farmgate Licence - help new and small-scale producers sell their products locally, and to fill the demand for local meat products in rural communities.
  - Farmgate Plus - available province-wide and will help alleviate ranchers' and producers' concerns about accessing processing services, as well as provide new sales opportunities province-wide at farmers markets, retail shops and restaurants.
  - Abattoir Licence - synchronized with existing business and licence procedures, and will continue to offer fully inspected meat production with no restriction on volume or sales within B.C.
- Supporting rural abattoirs through an updated, training program that focusses on improved food safety and animal welfare (SlaughterRight).

- 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 (now Abattoir license) abattoirs.
- **Total Funding:** \$148,000
  
- **Good news validators:**
  - Tristan Banwell, rancher, vice president of the Small-Scale Meat Producers Association.
  - Collin Van Horne, Nighthawk Ridge Farms, Port Alberni

## **Wildfire, drought, flood assistance**

- \$228 million Canada-BC Flood Recovery Program for Food Security to help B.C. farmers recover from the unprecedented flooding and return to operation.
- \$20M Canada-B.C. Wildfire and Drought AgriRecovery Initiative to help ranchers/farmers/producers with

extraordinary expenses caused by 2021 wildfires and drought. (B.C.'s share is 40%)

- B.C. ranchers able to access funding to help with livestock feed, shelter, health and transportation expenses due to wildfires and drought.
- 2021 Wildfire Emergency Feed Program provided 14 days of emergency feed to eligible livestock businesses. (\$1M in funding).
- Emergency Flood Forage Program provided funding to fill immediate need of forage for livestock in weeks following flooding (\$1M)
- The Feed Cost Differential Program assisted with extra expenses of sourcing and transporting feed ingredients to farms between Nov. 17 and Dec. 1. (\$2.7M)
- The program was delivered in partnership with BC Dairy, BC Poultry and BC Pork and offered to commercial feed suppliers across the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island, helping ensure BC producers were able to continue taking care of their animals while they recovered from the floods.
- Range Rider program established to support impacted livestock producers or First Nations needing emergency assistance to round-up, sort and move cattle threatened by wildfire on range lands. (\$100K)
- Staff support assisting with livestock relocation, emergency feed and care for livestock and poultry, and

providing Premises ID information to local authorities and First Nations for emergency planning purposes.

- **Good news validators:**

- BC Cattlemen's Association general manager Kevin Boon
- BC Dairy Association general manager Jeremy Dunn
- Cordy Cox, president, Cariboo Cattlemen's Association

## **Chicken/Egg/Poultry Sector**

- In 2020, British Columbians led the country in the growth of table egg sales.
- Chicken was one of the top 5 commodities in terms of farm cash receipts in B.C. in 2020.
- 600,000 shelled eggs procured (April 1, 2020 – March 21, 2021) for Interior Health Feed BC.

- **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 \$15.25 million in 2020 (2% increase).
- Dairy products saw a jump of \$283.2 million (18% increase).

## Bees/Pollinators

- Proclaimed May 29<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 86 Bee BC projects have been funded to-date.
- **Total funding since 2018: \$280,000 for Bee BC**
  
- **Bee technology transfer program** - \$525k investment over three years (2021), includes setting up a research apiary and helping to coordinate research and education to build sustainability.
  
- **Good news validators:**
  - Heather Higo, 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 2020, approx. 1.74 million kilograms of honey was produced in B.C.

### **Agritech and Regenerative Agriculture**

- More than 150 agritech companies in B.C.
- By 2025, B.C.'s agritech sector is expected to generate an estimated \$600 million in revenue, and directly support ~2,300 jobs.

- Agritech Grant program (\$7.5M in 2021) provided funding of up to \$500K to companies focussing on new technologies and increasing domestic food production.
  - TechBrew Robotics (Salmon Arm)
  - Artificially Inspired Technologies (Surrey)
- Launching Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network (RAAN).
- RAAN will help farmers adopt or expand regenerative practices by using the latest agritech so they can better mitigate the impacts of climate change and increase both profitability and environmental sustainability.
- Hosted RegenBC conference to learn more about regenerative agriculture and agritech and connect BC farmers and tech companies.
- **Good news validators:**
  - Karn Manhas, CEO and founder of Terramera
  - Mickey Aylard, Owner, Brackenhurst Farm

## **Aquaculture & Seafood Sector**

- Supporting healthy oceans and stocks through:
  - \$143M (\$42M from B.C.) over 5 years (2019-24) for BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund to restore fish habitat and protect vulnerable wild Pacific salmon with commitment to double the fund.
  - As of September 2021, 60 BCSRIF projects have been funded, accounting for over \$85M.
  - \$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 validator:**
  - 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).

## **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.

- 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.

## **Indigenous**

- B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) is first of its kind in Canada, working to advance reconciliation, create a more resilient food system in Indigenous communities around B.C. and build strong Indigenous economies reflecting Indigenous rights, cultures, priorities and values.
- 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: \$300,000 in CAP funding supporting 61 projects to-date (started in 2018).

- Supports Indigenous governments, communities and organizations 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 validators:**
  - Chief Willie Sellars, Williams Lake First Nation.
  - Chief Byron Louie, Okanagan Indian Band and IACF Chair.
  - Chief Ken Baird, Tsawwassen First Nations.

## **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.
- 30 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.
- \$20M Canada-B.C. Wildfire and Drought AgriRecovery Initiative to help ranchers/farmers with extraordinary expenses caused by 2021 wildfires and drought. (B.C.'s share is 40%)
- **Good news validators:**
  - BC Agriculture Council
  - BC Cattlemen's Association general manager Kevin Boon

### **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 have 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:**

- 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 causing suffering or distress to an animal in B.C., including owners 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 \$86.5 million in the last five years:
  - \$55.5 million from Agri-Insurance claims
  - \$17.5 million through AgriStability and B.C.'s AgriStability Enhancement program
  - \$5.5 million for the AgriInvest program
  - \$3 million for Tree Fruit Replant Program
  - \$5 million for Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund

- Released Tree Fruit Stabilization Plan in Fall 2021 to set out a blueprint for helping to respond to economic challenges facing the industry.
- \$5M to Town of Oliver (April 2021) to ensure orchards, wineries and farms in the region have a stable irrigation system.
- **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)
- \$5M to Town of Oliver (April 2021) to ensure orchards, wineries and farms in the region have a stable irrigation system.
- **Good news validators:**
  - 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 with an economic impact of \$2.8 billion annually.
- Combined sales from B.C. breweries, wineries and distilleries amounted to \$1.7 billion in 2020.

## **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

## **Additional info:**

- FarmFolk CityFolk and the B.C. government partnered on a made-in-B.C. mobile seed-cleaning unit in 2019. The unit is based in the Fraser Valley but has been demonstrated in communities around the province.
- By expanding the role of the food hubs, many seed producers with smaller, family-run farms that cannot afford their own seed cleaning and packaging equipment, will now be able to access these services.

## **Greenhouse Growers Sector**

- Carbon tax relief grants for greenhouse growers, covering 80% of the carbon tax.
- Funding BC vegetables, plants and flowers stay competitive.
- Annual funding is \$7.55 million with 20/21 expenditures coming in at \$9.4 million.
- Buy BC and international marketing programs are helping growers sell their products here and in other markets, and government funding for new technology is supporting innovation.
- For example, the Province is contributing \$355,000 towards energy-efficiency improvements at Windset Farms in Delta through the CleanBC Industry Fund.
- The project will install a retractable thermal curtain at one of the company's greenhouses to trap heat in low-light conditions during cloudy days and at night.

## **Good news validators:**

- Linda Delli Santi, executive director of the BC Greenhouse Growers' Association
- Steve Newell, president and CEO, Windset Farms

## **Additional info:**

- The Greenhouse Carbon Tax Relief Grant helps over 190 B.C. commercial greenhouse vegetable, floriculture, wholesale landscape nurseries and forest seedling operations. Cannabis is not an eligible crop at any phase of production.
- The program is fully expended each year. The grant returned approximately \$9.3 million to commercial greenhouse operators in 2020/21.
- BC Greenhouse Growers Assoc represents 55 member greenhouses.
- Types of vegetables grown: many varieties of tomatoes including beefsteak, tomato on the vine and cocktail, sweet bell peppers, hot peppers, mini peppers, long English cucumbers, mini cucumbers, eggplants, butter lettuce and strawberries.

## **Organic Sector**

- Mandatory certification required for the use of the word 'organic' (2018).
- Supported Certified Organic Association with \$340,000 for a new online certification tool that streamlines the certification process and encourages more producers to pursue organic certification.
- Provided Kwantlen Polytechnic University up to \$100,000 in funding to fund a study on how the government can better support the organic sector increase production and sales of BC products.
- **Good news validator:**
  - Heather Stretch, co-president, Organic BC

### **Additional info:**

- There are almost 500 certified organic agricultural producers and over 200 certified processors and handlers in the province.
- As of September 1, 2018, the term "organic" became a protected label within B.C.
- The organic label can be used if the product holds certification through the B.C. Certified Organic Program or the Canadian Organic Regime.

## **Traceability Programs**

- A \$313,500 uplift to traceability programs in B.C. supported 20 B.C. farmers and food processors in upgrading equipment that tracks animal and product movement to and from farms, or transit to processing and distribution centres (Feb 2020).
- Traceability Programs are supported by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, total funding in B.C. since Jan. 2018 is \$2.55 million.
- The programs help ranchers and farmers respond to emergencies, and support food safety in B.C.
- Moving forward with a mandatory Premises Identification (ID) regulation to help livestock producers and communities better prepare for emergencies and be equipped to respond to them. A new Premises ID regulation under the B.C. Animal Health Act is anticipated to be in place in early 2022.
- **Good news validators:**
  - Cascadia Seafood (CAP Traceability Program)
  - BC Cattlemen's Association (Premises ID)

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**  
**Ministry Estimates Budget**  
2010/11 to 2022/23

|             | Ministry<br>Estimates | Annual<br>Increase | Annual<br>Increase % | Cumulative<br>Increase | Cumulative<br>Increase % |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2010/11     | 65,771                |                    |                      |                        |                          |
| 2011/12     | 65,778                | 7                  | 0%                   | 7                      | 0%                       |
| 2012/13     | 68,143                | 2,365              | 3%                   | 2,372                  | 3%                       |
| 2013/14 (1) | 79,307                | 11,164             | 14%                  | 13,536                 | 17%                      |
| 2014/15     | 80,024                | 717                | 1%                   | 14,253                 | 18%                      |
| 2015/16     | 80,229                | 205                | 0%                   | 14,458                 | 18%                      |
| 2016/17     | 81,383                | 1,154              | 1%                   | 15,612                 | 19%                      |
| 2017/18 (2) | 85,152                | 3,769              | 4%                   | 19,381                 | 23%                      |
| 2018/19 (3) | 93,143                | 7,991              | 9%                   | 27,372                 | 29%                      |
| 2019/20 (4) | 98,207                | 5,064              | 5%                   | 32,436                 | 33%                      |
| 2020/21 (5) | 95,404                | - 2,803            | -3%                  | 29,633                 | 31%                      |
| 2021/22 (6) | 98,989                | 3,585              | 4%                   | 33,218                 | 34%                      |
| 2022/23 (7) | 107,021               | 8,032              | 8%                   | 41,250                 | 39%                      |

**NOTES**

- (1) \$4.039M increase for Meat Inspection  
ALC received \$0.931M for increased oversight of ALR  
\$6.5M for the Greenhouse Carbon Tax Relief Grant Program
- (2) \$1.200M for Production Insurance Special Account  
\$2.000M for the Buy Local Program
- (3) \$7.440 for Grow, Feed, Buy BC Budget 2018 Uplift
- (4) \$3.100M for Grow, Feed, Buy BC Budget 2018 Uplift  
\$1.030M for Cannabis Legalization
- (5) (\$4.316)M reduction from Budget 2020 update  
\$0.850M for Grow, Feed, Buy BC Budget 2018 Uplift
- (6) \$3.400M for Enhance Grow, Feed, Buy BC Budget 2022 Uplift
- (7) \$5.000M for CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 Budget 2022 Uplift  
\$3.000M for Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy Budget 2022 Uplift

**Ministry of Agriculture and Food**  
**Summary Roll-up of Total FTE Burn by Division**

| Core Business                      | AVERAGE Monthly FTE Burn |           |                   |           |                   |           |                   |          |                   |            |                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|------------|---------------------|
|                                    | 2017/18<br>Actual        | Change    | 2018/19<br>Actual | Change    | 2019/20<br>Actual | Change    | 2020/21<br>Actual | Change   | 2021/22<br>Actual | Change     | 2022/23<br>Forecast |
| Science, Policy and Inspection (1) | 143                      | 4         | 147               | 0         | 148               | 11        | 159               | 13       | 172               | (13)       | 159                 |
| Agriculture Resources (2)          | 165                      | 6         | 172               | 14        | 185               | 10        | 195               | (7)      | 188               | 4          | 192                 |
| BC Farm Industry Review Board      | 8                        | (1)       | 7                 | 1         | 8                 | 0         | 8                 | 0        | 8                 | 0          | 8                   |
| Executive and Support Services     | 10                       | 1         | 11                | 1         | 12                | (0)       | 12                | 3        | 15                | 0          | 15                  |
| <b>Total Ministry Operations</b>   | <b>326</b>               | <b>11</b> | <b>337</b>        | <b>16</b> | <b>353</b>        | <b>21</b> | <b>374</b>        | <b>9</b> | <b>383</b>        | <b>(9)</b> | <b>374</b>          |
| Agricultural Land Commission       | 34                       | (1)       | 33                | 8         | 41                | (2)       | 39                | (2)      | 37                | 0          | 37                  |
| <b>Total Ministry</b>              | <b>360</b>               | <b>10</b> | <b>370</b>        | <b>24</b> | <b>394</b>        | <b>19</b> | <b>413</b>        | <b>7</b> | <b>420</b>        | <b>(9)</b> | <b>411</b>          |

This is based on FTE burn, not positions and is influenced by overtime hours.

**Notes:**

- 1) 201/22 Internal Ministry re-org shifted FTEs between Divisions / 9 FTE's transferred to New Ministry and 4 FTE's transferred to ARD from SPID in Re-Org
- 2) Increase of 4 FTEs related to Grow, Feed, Buy BC Budget uplift in 2018/19 / Increase of 4 FTEs related to disbandment of ALUS and bringing it into the Ministry
- 3) Remainder of increases are not attributable to any one specific initiative or program - could be resulting from filling of vacancies or maternity leaves

**Not included in table above:**

- 4 Net-new FTE's for Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS)
- 2 Net-new FTE's for CleanBC Roadmap to 2030

# Budget 2022 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Agriculture and Food

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**Issue: *What is in the Budget 2022 Stronger Together for the Ministry of Agriculture?***

### **CPAS Funding:**

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

The 2022 CPAS Phase 2 funding will build upon strategic design work that was undertaken in 21/22 funded under CPAS Phase 1.

- CPAS Phase 1 2020/21 funding was provided to AF to prepare for CPAS implementation:
  - \$310,000 to develop an agricultural climate adaptation infrastructure program (RMU lead).
  - \$100,000 for recommendations to enhance the provincial agricultural weather monitoring network and related services (RMU lead).

CPAS Funding will deliver:

- Provide climate-targeted programming to complement the Environmental Farm Plan Program and Beneficial Management Practices Program. This will primarily be focussed on piloting on-farm climate risk planning and new extreme weather event (flood, wildfire, extreme heat) risk mitigation infrastructure BMPs to support on-farm resiliency.
  - Examples of BMP's that could be supported include: wildfire prevention sprinklers, efficient HVAC cooling systems for barns, infrastructure to raise high risk materials from flood zones (on-farm pesticide and fuel storage).
- Expanded and targeted cost-share funding to support on-farm adaptation BMP's related to water use efficiency and water storage.
- Opportunity to deliver targeted FireSmart projects on agricultural properties interfacing with wildlands, with possible linkages to BC Wildfire Service initiatives.
- Build on the outputs from the CAP Ministry's Climate Change Adaptation Program.
- Provide climate-targeted programming to complement the Environmental Farm Plan Program and Beneficial Management Practices Program.

# Budget 2022 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Agriculture and Food

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Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

The budget lift will be used to support increased BMP programming to be prioritized to reduce GHG emissions in the agriculture sector as well as carbon sequestration BMP programming

1. Reduce Agricultural GHG Emissions: Support piloting, commercialization and on-farm adoption of new agri-technologies, practices and fuel-switching that assists the sector's transition to net-zero.
2. Enhance Agricultural Carbon Sinks: Increase on-farm adoption of new agri-technologies and practices resulting in enhanced agricultural carbon sinks to help offset emissions from food production.

Initiatives will be designed to incorporate program level GHG accounting into funding programs, to enable continuous improvement on performance measures with each funding cycle.

On-farm carbon sequestration practices (e.g., cover cropping, rotational grazing, shelterbelt planting) are among the most cost-efficient ways to reduce net agricultural GHG emissions and will be encouraged through programming.

Programming will support research funding, industry development/expansion, pilot testing and effectiveness monitoring to support GHG-reducing and agri-tech.

The programming will work to address barriers to producer adoption and implementation of carbon sink-reducing BMPs through supportive policy, research and development, targeted cost-share programming, on-site training, and education and awareness campaigns. Improve data monitoring, verification, reporting, and inter-ministry data sharing of carbon sinks on agricultural land.

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*Excerpts from the Budget and Fiscal Plan:*

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### **Under Building a Strong Environment for Our Future**

- Page 27: In support of agricultural climate action, Budget 2022 includes \$15 million over three years to support increased intakes under the Beneficial Management Practices program, which supports on-farm upgrades to adopt sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture practices.

# Budget 2022 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Agriculture and Food

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### Under Flood Response and Recovery:

- Page 31-32: As part of its fiscal update in December 2021, the federal government allocated \$5 billion for its share of flood recovery costs and other recent natural disasters in British Columbia, such as the 2021 wildfires. This includes the federal costs under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements as well as other federal cost share programs, such as Agri-Recovery. The funding is an initial provision of federal funding and assessing the full costs of rebuilding remains an ongoing process. The Province and Government of Canada, along with Indigenous partners and local partners, will continue to work together to support British Columbians through this crisis and as communities rebuild.
- The total cost and necessary supports are not yet known as work to evaluate the damage is ongoing. Budget 2022 sets aside over \$1.1 billion in Contingencies over the fiscal plan period as a starting point to accommodate anticipated costs and additional supports for people, communities and businesses impacted by the floods. This includes funding for specific programs such as Agri-Recovery — a federal-provincial cost program that helps farmers recover, thereby supporting the province’s food security — but it will also support the rebuilding process more generally. This will also include options to supplement existing programs, such as Disaster Financial Assistance, housing supports for communities that need to rebuild, and efforts to modernize emergency management in British Columbia

### Under Labour Market

- Page 97: The labour market in B.C. strengthened significantly throughout 2021. Employment grew by 6.6 per cent in 2021, remaining above pre-pandemic levels since June, and was 2.4 per cent higher in January 2022 compared to pre-pandemic February 2020.... The goods-producing sector grew modestly (+1,900 jobs) in 2021, where growth in the manufacturing sector (+11,400 jobs) offset declines in the agriculture sector (-7,900 jobs)

### Under COVID-19 Pandemic Response Measures

- Page 131: Other Essential services (\$77 million): Funding to ensure continuity of services includes: • Continued supports for increased access to overdose prevention services and outreach teams, as well as enhanced drug checking services throughout B.C.; • Justice sector initiatives to support the safe operations of courts through facilitating virtual court proceedings, electronic filing solutions and other system enhancements; and • Continued supports for farmers and agricultural sector workers to safely access and accommodate temporary foreign workers.

[https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/pdf/2022\\_Budget\\_and\\_Fiscal\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2022/pdf/2022_Budget_and_Fiscal_Plan.pdf)

**Date Prepared/Revised: March 7, 2022**

**Ministry Executive Sponsor:**

Name: Ranbir Parmar

Phone: (778) 698-3756

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**Prepared for Budget 2022**

# Budget 2022 Briefing Note

## Ministry of Agriculture and Food

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**Program Contact for Issue:**

Name: Tamara Romanova

Phone: (778) 974-2682

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**  
**Expense Statement and Forecast**  
**by Core Business**  
**Based on actuals as at January 31, 2022 (\$000s)**

As of Jan 5th

| Core Business                                      | Estimates<br>Budget | Working<br>Budget | Contingency<br>Access | Revised<br>Working<br>Budget | YTD<br>Actual  | Planned<br>TYE  | Total<br>Forecast | (Over)<br>Under | December<br>Forecast | Increase<br>(Decrease) |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Science, Policy & Inspection Division <sup>1</sup> | 17,250              | 18,128            | 31,675                | 49,803                       | 43,121         | 7,620           | 50,741            | (938)           | 51,234               | (492)                  |
| Agriculture Resource Division <sup>2</sup>         | 56,135              | 54,907            | 5,720                 | 60,627                       | 55,628         | 7,044           | 62,672            | (2,045)         | 61,805               | 867                    |
| BC Farm Industry Review Board <sup>3</sup>         | 1,378               | 1,378             |                       | 1,378                        | 1,201          | 648             | 1,849             | (471)           | 1,603                | 246                    |
| Minister's Office                                  | 742                 | 742               |                       | 742                          | 532            | 172             | 704               | 38              | 705                  | (1)                    |
| Deputy Minister's Office                           |                     | 804               |                       | 804                          | 869            | 295             | 1,164             | (360)           | 1,096                | 68                     |
| Centrally Managed Costs (OH)                       |                     | 2,860             |                       | 2,860                        | 2,491          | 891             | 3,382             | (522)           | 3,384                | (2)                    |
| Corporate Services (CSNR & IITD)                   | 6,131               | 2,898             |                       | 2,898                        | -              | 3,675           | 3,675             | (777)           | 3,684                | (9)                    |
|  | <b>81,636</b>       | <b>81,717</b>     | <b>37,395</b>         | <b>119,112</b>               | <b>103,843</b> | <b>20,345</b>   | <b>124,188</b>    | <b>(5,076)</b>  | <b>123,512</b>       | <b>676</b>             |
| Agricultural Land Commission                       | 5,001               | 4,920             |                       | 4,920                        | 3,447          | 1,231           | 4,677             | 243             | 4,675                | 2                      |
|  | <b>5,001</b>        | <b>4,920</b>      | <b>-</b>              | <b>4,920</b>                 | <b>3,447</b>   | <b>1,231</b>    | <b>4,677</b>      | <b>243</b>      | <b>4,675</b>         | <b>2</b>               |
| Production Insurance Special Acct                  | 23,200              | 23,200            |                       | 23,200                       | 44,561         | (21,361)        | 23,200            | -               | 23,200               | (0)                    |
| Elimination - Production Insurance                 | (10,000)            | (10,000)          |                       | (10,000)                     | -              | (10,000)        | (10,000)          | -               | (10,000)             | -                      |
|  | <b>13,200</b>       | <b>13,200</b>     | <b>-</b>              | <b>13,200</b>                | <b>44,561</b>  | <b>(31,361)</b> | <b>13,200</b>     | <b>-</b>        | <b>13,200</b>        | <b>(0)</b>             |
|  | <b>99,837</b>       | <b>99,837</b>     | <b>37,395</b>         | <b>137,232</b>               | <b>151,851</b> | <b>(9,786)</b>  | <b>142,065</b>    | <b>(4,833)</b>  | <b>141,387</b>       | <b>678</b>             |

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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

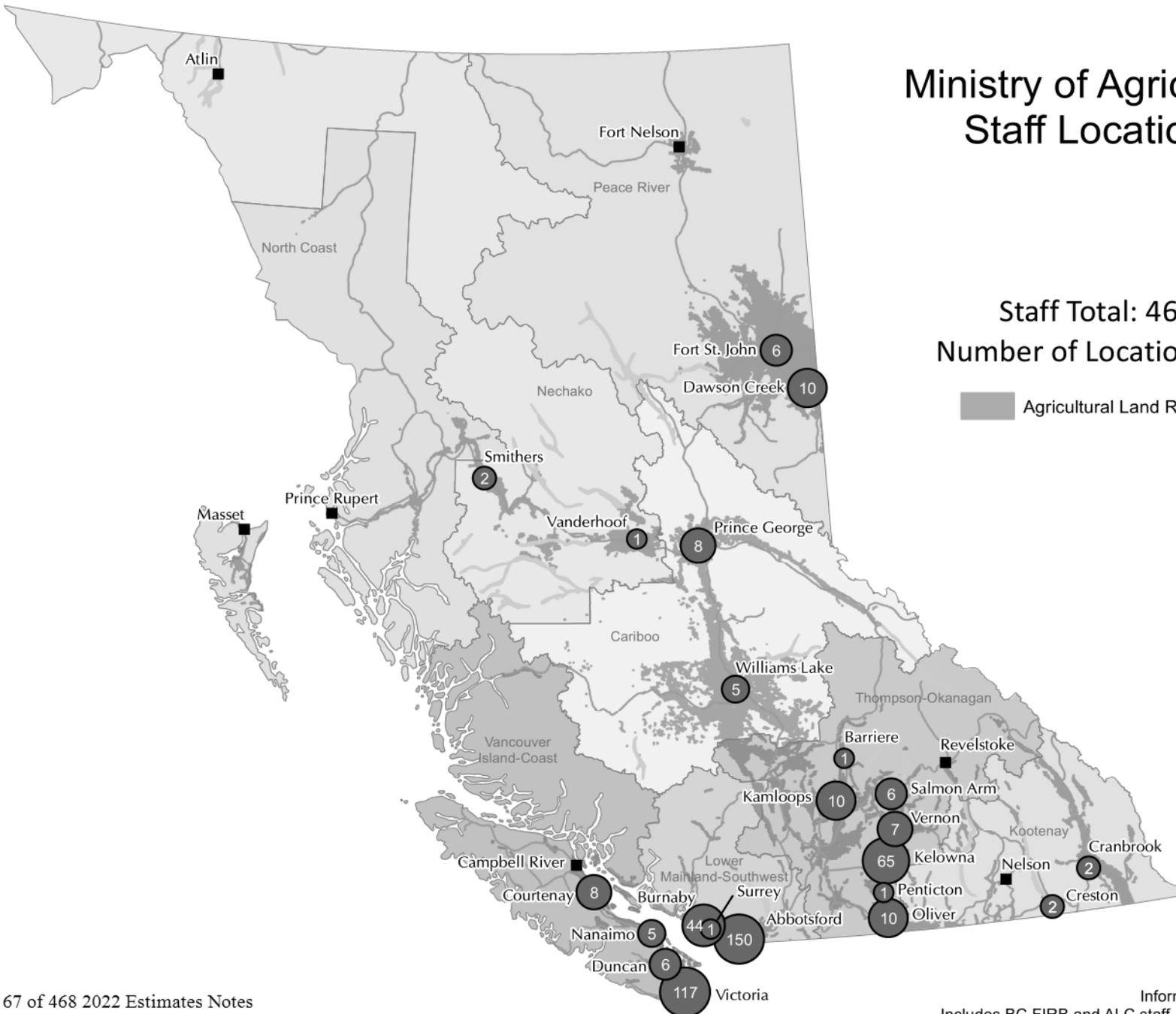
Advice/Recommendations ; Government Financial Information

# Ministry of Agriculture Staff Locations

Staff Total: 467

Number of Locations: 22

 Agricultural Land Reserve



## Ministry Staff Vaccination Rates

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Effective November 22, 2021, all employees in the BC Public Service (BCPS) were required to provide proof of vaccination, and compliance with this policy is a condition of employment.
- Accommodations for medical or other grounds protected under the B.C. Human Rights Code were also considered.
- Approximately 1% of BCPS employees chose not to be vaccinated or chose not to disclose their vaccination status. Those employees were placed on unpaid leave for 3 months, at the end of which they were informed they would face termination if still unvaccinated and if no accommodation was in place.
- It would be inappropriate to share more details given these are human resource matters that must be treated with an appropriate respect for the privacy of those employees.
- However, I can confirm the ministry did take steps to ensure these terminations did not substantively impact ministry operations and service delivery.
- Questions about the details and application of the vaccination policy are appropriately addressed to the Minister of Finance as the minister responsible for the BC Public Service Agency.

### BACKGROUND:

- Following the announcement, and beginning on November 8, 2021 Ministry Executive Directors were asked to ensure proof of vaccination of all employees by reviewing B.C. Vaccine Cards. Employees had to provide this proof, by November 22, 2021.
- Employees who were unvaccinated on November 22, 2021 were placed on unpaid leave for three months.
- An employee who was partially vaccinated on November 22 – meaning they have received one dose of vaccine – had up to 35 days after the date of their first dose to become fully vaccinated or they would be placed on unpaid leave.

ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
C o n f i d e n t i a l A d v i c e t o M i n i s t e r

- Effective November 8, 2021, employees could request an exemption from the vaccine requirement based on a medical condition or other protected ground as defined under B.C.'s Human Rights Code. Those requests for accommodation are currently under review with the BC Public Service Agency.

Advice/Recommendations; Personal Information

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- N/A

| <b>Approved by:</b> | <b>Prepared by:</b> | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Name: Peter Pokorny | Name: Shawna Lyttle | Name:                     |
| Date approved:      | Branch: DMO         | Branch:                   |
| Phone:              | Phone: 778-974-2142 | Phone:                    |
| Cell:               | Cell: Government    | Cell:                     |

## 2022-2023 Service Plan

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The 2022/23 service plan is structured around the following three key goals:
  1. Strengthen provincial food systems and B.C.'s food security;
  2. Position B.C. as a leader in regenerative agriculture practices and agritech; and
  3. Support sustainable aquaculture sectors.
- Goal 3 was previously "Reinvigorate and protect provincial fisheries, seafood and aquaculture sectors," but was changed as fisheries are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship.
- The Ministry is forecasting the following:
  - To exceed the target of 35 by 5 for objective 2.1 a: " Number of B.C.-based agritech company growth opportunities supported through Ministry programing",
  - To meet the target of 250<sup>1</sup> for 2.1 b: "Number of Beneficial Management Practice projects completed by farmers, supporting regenerative agriculture practices and technologies", and
  - To maintain existing performance of 112 for objective 1.2 a" "Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods," but not meet the target of 145.
- This year, Objective 1.2: "Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods" has a new performance measure "Number of Buy BC logo licensed products"
- Performance measures are in development for two objectives. These were also in development in the 2021/2022 service plan but have been extended due to new the Ministry's new mandate and changing priorities:
  - Objective 1.1 "Improve living and working conditions for farm workers"
  - Objective 3.1 "Support safe, sustainable increase of B.C. seafood processing capacity"
- For Objective 1.1 the development of performance measures has been extended as opportunities to align this objective with other ministries work have been highlighted resulting in cross-Ministry work being required to establish performance measures.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note that 2.1b of the service plan is currently being updated. 2021/22 should read 250; 2022/23 should read 260; both 2023/24 and 2024/25 should read 270.

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- For Objective 3.1 the development of performance measures has been extended to allow the ministry time to implement the new mandate commitment “Recognizing their significant roles in rural and coastal communities, support BC’s seafood producers and processors by promoting local innovation to ensure local processing of local seafood.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Ministry’s annual service plan outlines how the Ministry will support government’s priorities and tracks progress through performance measures.
- The Ministry publishes an annual service plan to outline how the Ministry will support the government’s priorities including select action items identified in the November 2020 Minister’s Mandate Letter.
- The service plan tracks progress through performance measures and includes the Ministry’s operating budget.
- The 2022/23 service plan is structured around three key goals:
  1. Strengthen provincial food systems and B.C.’s food security;
  2. Position B.C. as a leader in regenerative agriculture practices and agritech; and
  3. Support sustainable aquaculture sectors.
    - a. In the 2021/22 Service Plan this goal was: Reinvigorate and protect provincial fisheries, seafood and aquaculture sectors.
- There are two key differences from the 2021/2022 service plan:
  - Additional introductory text was added to reflect the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change emergencies that have occurred in the last year with a focus on the November 2021 flooding;
  - Goal 3 was changed as fisheries are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship.
    - This change also resulted in two objectives being removed.
- The Ministry is forecasting to exceed the target for objective 2.1 a “Number of B.C.-based agritech company growth opportunities supported through Ministry programming”, meet the target for 2.1 b “Number of Beneficial Management Practice projects completed by farmers, supporting regenerative agriculture practices and technologies”, and to maintain existing performance for objective 1.2 “Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods “ but not meet the target.
- Changes to performance measures from the previous service plan are outlined in appendix 1.
- Key changes to objectives include:

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- Objective 1.2 “Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods” has a new objective 1.2 B “Number of Buy BC logo licensed products”
- Objective 3.1 “Support safe, sustainable increase of B.C. seafood processing capacity” was adjusted from “Support B.C. seafood processing capacity”
- Performance measures for two objective are being developed. These were also in development in the 2021/2022 service plan but have been extended into this service plan due to new opportunities arising and a change to the ministries mandate:
  - Objective 1.1” Improve living and working conditions for farm workers”: The 2021/2022 service plan stated, “performance measures and targets will be developed and confirmed by May 2021.” However, over the past year opportunities to align this objective with other ministries work have been highlighted resulting in cross-Ministry work being required to establish performance measures.
  - Objective 3.1” Support safe, sustainable increase of B.C. seafood processing capacity”: Performance measures will be developed as the Ministry works to implement the new mandate commitment “Recognizing their significant roles in rural and coastal communities, support B.C.’s seafood producers and processors by promoting local innovation to ensure local processing of local seafood.”

| <b>Approved by:</b>   | <b>Prepared by:</b> | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Name: Kelly Rainforth | Name: Jasmine Taulu | Name: Shawna Lyttle       |
| Date approved:        | Branch: DMO         | Branch: DMO               |
| Phone: (250) 952-3266 | Phone: 250-419-8546 | Phone: 778 974-2142       |
| Cell: Government      | Cell:               | Cell:                     |

ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
 Confidential Advice to Minister

Appendix 1: Performance measures changes in 2022/2023 service plan compared to the 2021/2022 service plan

| Objective  | Performance Measure   | Progress   |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Goal 1: Strengthen provincial food systems and B.C.'s food security</i>                                   |   |  |
| 1.1 Improve living and working conditions for farm workers   |   | Performance measures have not yet been established   |
| 1.2 Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods            | A. Number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food expenditures within total annual food expenditures | We are forecasting that 2021/2022 will have the same performance and 2020/2021 which will not meet the target for 2021/2022- This is due to COVID- 19 impacts on food service providers<br><br>Future targets have been increased. |
|  | B. Number of Buy BC logo licensed products  | New performance measure was created  |
| <i>Goal 2: Support the development of the agritech sector and promote regenerative agriculture practices</i> |   |  |
| 2.1 Support the development of the agritech sector and promote regenerative agriculture practices            | A. Number of B.C.-based agritech company growth opportunities supported through Ministry programing   | We are Forecasting to exceed the target for 2021/2022<br><br>Future targets have increased from those set in the 2021/2022 service plan  |
|  | B. Number of Beneficial Management Practice projects completed by farmers, supporting regenerative agriculture practices and technologies <sup>2</sup>        | We are forecasting to meet the target for 2021/2022<br><br>Future targets remain the same as those set in the 2021/2022 service plan   |
| <i>Goal 3: Support sustainable aquaculture sectors</i>   |   |  |
| 3.1 Support safe, sustainable increase of B.C. seafood processing capacity                                   |   | Performance measures have not yet been established   |

<sup>2</sup> Please note that 2.1b of the service plan is currently being updated. 2021/22 should read 250; 2022/23 should read 260; both 2023/24 and 2024/25 should read 270.

ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23      Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

# Ministry of Agriculture and Food

## 2022/23 – 2024/25 Service Plan

February 2022



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

Ministry of Agriculture and Food

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or visit our website at

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/agri/>

Published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food

## Minister's Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2022/23 – 2024/25 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 "Lana Popham".

Honourable Lana Popham  
Minister of Agriculture and Food  
February 10, 2022

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## **Purpose of the Ministry**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) is responsible for the production, marketing, processing and merchandising of agriculture and seafood products; the institution and carrying out of advisory, research, promotional, sustainability and adaptation, food safety and plant and animal health programs; projects and undertakings relating to agriculture and seafood; and the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture and seafood.

The Ministry is a key contributor to economic development and diversification across the Province and is a main contributor to rural economic development and province-wide job creation, particularly for small businesses. The agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sector creates economic and social benefits for Indigenous groups and other underrepresented groups, has the potential to attract provincial investment, and contributes to workforce development and skills training.

2021/2022 was a challenging year for the agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sector. Various new provincial government commitments and issues have risen from the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to environmental and climate change related emergencies. This included flooding in November 2021 which impacted 1,123 farms and was the worst financial agricultural disaster in B.C.'s history.

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](#) for is available online.

## **Strategic Direction**

In 2022/2023, the Government of British Columbia will continue its whole-of-government response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on protecting the health, social and economic well-being of British Columbians. Building on our economic, environmental, and social strengths while looking to seize opportunities to improve outcomes for all British Columbians will be an important aspect of each ministry's work as we respond to COVID-19 and recover from devastating floods and wildfires. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will align with the five foundational principles established by government in 2020: putting people first; working toward lasting and meaningful reconciliation; supporting equity and anti-racism; ensuring a better future through fighting climate change and meeting our greenhouse gas reduction targets; and supporting a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

This 2022/23 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Agriculture and Food will support the government's priorities including the foundational principles listed above and selected action items identified in the [November 2020 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

## **Economic Statement**

B.C.'s economy has rebounded from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020, despite significant pandemic variant and climate-related events. A strong health response, high vaccination rates, increased infrastructure investments and supports for British Columbians struggling through the pandemic has helped the province rebound. While the recovery has broadened over the past year, it remains uneven with sectors like tourism, hospitality and live recreation events not fully recovered. The path of the ongoing economic recovery in B.C. and its trading partners remains highly uncertain. However, rebuild efforts from the November 2021 floods are expected to provide some support to economic activity in the province. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 5.1 per cent in 2021 and expects growth of 4.2 per cent in 2022 and 2.7 per cent in 2023. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC projects national real GDP growth of 4.1 per cent in 2022 and 2.8 per cent in 2023, following an estimated gain of 4.7 per cent in 2021. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The pandemic has increased risks to B.C.'s economic outlook, such as the emergence of further variants of concern, inflationary supply chain disruptions, extended travel restrictions, and the continued impact of the slower recovery in some sectors of the B.C. economy. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, and lower commodity prices.

## Performance Planning

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

Strengthening the provincial food system remains a provincial priority as it contributes to a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

#### Objective 1.1: Improve living and working conditions for farm workers

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of having a stable and healthy workforce to ensure food security for British Columbians. The Ministry will work towards ensuring and enforcing safe, healthy and comfortable living standards (particularly for inter-provincial and international workers residing in on-farm accommodations or workcamps) and ensure improved working conditions for all agricultural workers.

#### Key Strategies

- Consider the development of an agriculture and seafood workforce strategy to address substandard living and working conditions for agricultural workers.
- Maintain COVID-19 specific supports including facilitating requisite quarantine periods at provincially managed accommodations hotels for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and improvements to on-farm accommodations to ensure worker health and safety (supplies, equipment and inspections).

#### Discussion

Cross-ministry work is needed prior to establishing a performance measure for this objective.

#### Objective 1.2: Ensure the provincial food system has the capacity to increase the availability of B.C. foods

In the *Budget 2021*, enhancing Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programming was approved for \$3.4 million. This will drive economic recovery, grow jobs across the sector and beyond, increase the safety and availability of local food, and build the sustainability and reliability of the provincial food system. Integrated programs targeting improvement will be delivered via various methods including agreements and partnerships with other government bodies, industry associations, expert program delivery agents, local governments, education institutions, and public health. Some programs will be administered fully by Ministry staff.

#### Key Strategies

- Expand the Grow BC, Feed BC, Buy BC programming.
- Increase awareness of the Buy BC brand and the variety and availability of B.C. food and beverages with B.C. citizens, retailers, restaurants, and distributors.
- Expand economic development opportunities and support business growth through capacity building, market readiness, and targeted programs for under presented groups such as Indigenous Peoples, new entrants, and youth.

- Foster growth and innovation in the processing sector through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, technical services and supports through the B.C. Food Hub Network.
- Build demand in B.C. public institutions and other facilities for more B.C. grown and locally processed food.

| Performance Measure(s)  | 2020/2021 Baseline | 2021/22 Forecast | Government Financial Information |
|---|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1.2a Number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food expenditures within total annual food expenditures | 103                | 112              |                                  |
| 1.2b Number of Buy BC logo licensed products  | 809                | 1,500            |                                  |

Data source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

### Linking Performance Measure to Objective

Increasing the number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to a minimum 30% B.C. food expenditure 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. Increasing the number of Buy BC logo licensed products that are grown, harvested, raised, or processed in B.C., and along with Buy BC promotional activities, drives increased consumer awareness of the Buy BC brand and 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, 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: Position B.C. as a leader in regenerative agriculture practices and agritech

Drawing on the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, the ministry is taking steps to make B.C. a leader in the emerging agritech sector and drive transformation and modernization in the agriculture and food sector. By bringing together natural systems of production through regenerative agriculture and supporting agritech, the Ministry aims to help increase farm profitability and employment opportunities, strengthen the provincial food system, improve environmental sustainability and reduce green house gas emissions. This shared goal with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation is reflected in the Ministry’s mandate letter to support regenerative agriculture and agritech.

**Objective 2.1: Support the development of the agritech sector and promote regenerative agriculture practices**

Take steps to support regenerative agriculture practices and the emerging agritech sector that is applying innovation and technology to agriculture, seafood and food production. Regenerative agriculture includes conservation practices that promote healthy soils (including carbon sequestration) and water cycling, while enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem health. Development of the agritech sector will support the creation of high-tech jobs, introduce new farm technologies, reduce reliance on manual labour and increase the productivity and profitability of farming businesses.

**Key Strategies**

- Stimulate growth and development of new technologies that will enhance agriculture and food processing sectors.
- Support the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices and agritech.
- Develop partnerships with private industry, academic, non-government organizations, and other levels of government to explore new ways to support increases in food production and processing through regenerative agriculture and agritech.
- Support agritech businesses to expand and grow, while ensuring British Columbians’ world-class sustainability, quality and safety standards continue.

| Performance Measure(s)   | 2018/19 - 2020/21 Baseline | 2021/22 Forecast | Government Financial Information |
|--|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2.1a Number of B.C.-based agritech company growth opportunities supported through Ministry programming   | 33                         | 40               |                                  |
| 2.1b Number of Beneficial Management Practice projects completed by farmers, supporting regenerative agriculture practices and technologies <sup>1</sup> | 225                        | 350              |                                  |

Data source: B.C. Agricultural Research and Development Corporation

<sup>1</sup> The baseline is the three-year average (2018/19 to 2020/21) associated with the baseline funding of the program. The forecast in 2020/21 is high relative to other years because the On-Farm Innovation Top-Up program added \$1.6M in funding to the BMP program in 2020/21.

**Linking Performance Measure to Objective**

Through the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) program, farmers may receive cost-share funding from the Ministry after they complete on-farm conservation 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.

## **Discussion**

Through the BMP, the Ministry is tracking adoption of regenerative agriculture practices and technologies or services that promote regenerative agriculture practices (build soil health, conserve water and implement biodiversity and ecological principles into farming). Through current funding opportunities for agritech companies, the Ministry is tracking new opportunities to grow the agritech sector. With the Ministry's strategy for implementing the mandate commitments for the Regenerative Agriculture Network in early stages, measures will be updated as the new targets are confirmed in 2022.

## **Goal 3: Support sustainable aquaculture sectors**

This goal addresses the Ministry's role in revitalizing the seafood sector as part of the government's broader goals on economic recovery, rural and coastal community growth, and food security.

### **Objective 3.1: Support safe, sustainable increase of B.C. seafood processing capacity**

To support increasing B.C.'s seafood economies, the Ministry will explore economic programs for safe, sustainable development using a dedicated funding package to support processing infrastructure and other cost-shared programs.

#### **Key Strategies**

- Supporting shellfish and seaweed businesses to expand and operate in a sustainable way to produce safe wholesome seafood products.
- Connecting seafood more deeply through existing provincial programs (e.g. Buy BC and the Food Hub Network) to enhance domestic and international marketing.

## **Discussion**

As the Ministry's work on implementing new mandate commitments proceeds, this objective will be updated.

## Financial Summary

Government Financial Information

| Core Business Area  | 2021/22 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup> | 2022/23 Estimates |
|---|---|-------------------|
| <b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>                           |   |                   |
| Science, Policy, and Inspection                             | 16,146                                  | 19,086            |
| Agriculture Resources                                       | 56,463                                  | 61,433            |
| BC Farm Industry Review Board                               | 1,378                                   | 1,378             |
| Executive and Support Services                              | 6,801                                   | 6,923             |
| Agricultural Land Commission                                | 5,001                                   | 5,001             |
| Production Insurance Account Special Account                | 13,200                                  | 13,200            |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>98,989</b>                           | <b>107,021</b>    |
| <b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue)</b> |   |                   |
| Executive and Support Services                              | 755                                     | 1,229             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>755</b>                              | <b>1,229</b>      |

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2021/22 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2022/23 Estimates.

## **Appendix A: Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals**

As of February 2022, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible and accountable for the following:

### Agricultural Land Commission

The Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is the independent administrative tribunal dedicated to preserving agricultural land and encouraging farming in B.C. The ALC is responsible for administering the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a provincial land use zone where agriculture is the primary land use taking place on the limited agricultural land base.

### British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board

The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board (the Board) is an independent administrative tribunal that operates at arm's-length from government. As the regulatory tribunal responsible for the general supervision of B.C. regulated marketing boards and commissions, the Board provides oversight, policy direction and decisions to ensure orderly marketing and to protect the public interest. In its adjudicative capacities, the Board provides a less formal system than the court for resolving disputes in a timely and cost-effective way.

The Marketing Boards and Commissions include:

BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission

BC Chicken Marketing Board

BC Cranberry Marketing Commission

BC Egg Marketing Board

BC Hog Marketing Commission

BC Milk Marketing Board

BC Turkey Marketing Board

BC Vegetable Marketing Commission



February 25, 2022

Honourable Lana Popham  
Minister of Agriculture and Food  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Popham:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Agriculture and Food.

In this past year, as a member of Cabinet, your work has contributed to this government's efforts to support British Columbians as they face the impacts of COVID-19. People throughout the province continue to work together to stay safe and rebuild their lives and communities from the effects of the pandemic. Our government remains committed to getting through the pandemic and its after effects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you –with support of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.

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**Office of the  
Premier**

**Web Site:**  
[www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

**Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

**Location:**  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria

- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.
- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government, and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

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British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. That means seeking out, fostering, and championing good ideas, regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- In the context of COVID-19, improve food security and the safety of workers by continuing to improve conditions for temporary foreign workers and temporary domestic workers in farming communities, with support from the Minister of Labour.
- Expand the Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programs to encourage greater food security and local business growth.
- Drawing on the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, take steps to make BC a leader in food security and the emerging agri-tech sector, helping BC companies that are bringing innovation to agriculture grow, hire more workers and position our province as an agri-tech leader, while protecting farmland in the ALR.
- With support from the Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, lead work to develop a new Regenerative Agricultural Network, which will create jobs for workers, opportunities for farmers and greater food security by bringing together natural systems of production with agri-technologies that enhance production.
- Support the work of the Minister of Education and Child Care to help make sure students are properly fed for learning, working with school districts to create more local school meal programs based on district data and priorities, by integrating Feed BC into this plan so that districts can include locally grown food.
- Support the work of the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to increase food security for people in need by expanding our supports to food banks and developing program partnerships with food producers, grocery stores and not-for-profits to develop discounted food market, food recovery and food redistribution programs.
- Ensure food security by leading short-term and long-term recovery efforts for farmers, ranchers, and food processors affected by weather events.

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- Recognizing their significant roles in rural and coastal communities, support BC's seafood producers and processors by promoting local innovation to ensure local processing of local seafood.

Our work as a government must continually evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated in this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual cabinet and Treasury Board oversight. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by cabinet.

All cabinet members are expected to review, understand and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a minister of the Crown, your conduct will reflect not only on you, but on cabinet and our government.

You are responsible for providing strong, professional, and ethical leadership within cabinet and your ministry. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and the public servants under their direction who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. You must ensure your minister's office meets the highest standards for integrity and provides a respectful and rewarding environment for all staff.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer, and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Horgan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Horgan  
Premier



February 25, 2022

Fin Donnelly, MLA  
Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, supporting the Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship and Minister responsible for Fisheries.

In this past year, your work has contributed to this government’s efforts to support British Columbians as they face the impacts of COVID-19. People throughout the province continue to work together to stay safe and rebuild their lives and communities from the effects of the pandemic. Our government remains committed to getting through the pandemic and its after effects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you –with support of your Minister and ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first:** Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.
- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the*

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Victoria

*Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

As you continue your work as Parliamentary Secretary, you will also continue to assist your Minister in carrying out your Minister's duties. You will represent the Minister at public events as needed, deliver speeches on behalf of the Minister, and act as a spokesperson for the government's position. You will continue your work of reaching out to stakeholders, businesses, civil society, and individuals across BC to better understand their perspectives and bring their views to your Minister.

As you enter your second year in this position, I expect you to continue your support for your Minister and make progress on the following items:

- Lead work with the federal government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize BC's wild salmon populations building on past successes such as protection of fish habitat and innovation in fish hatcheries.
- Work with federal, First Nations and local governments, support the work to develop and implement the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, Coastal Marine Strategy, and Wild Salmon Strategy.
- In collaboration with federal, First Nations, local governments, and industry, support the work to develop and implement a responsible plan, including technology-based solutions, to transition from open-net finfish aquaculture.

Your Minister is ultimately responsible and accountable for your ministry and its mandate; thus, all key decisions will be made by your Minister. Your role is to understand your Minister's policy goals, develop a deep understanding of the issues, participate in consultations with key stakeholders, Indigenous peoples, and the broader public, in order to give your best advice to the public service as it develops options for a decision by your Minister.

You will collaborate with your Minister, ministry, and the Premier's Office to develop a workplan to guide your efforts, including detail on how the professional public service will support your work.

All members are expected to review, understand and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a Parliamentary Secretary, your conduct will reflect not only on you, but on your Minister and our government.

You are accountable for providing strong, professional, and ethical leadership. I expect you to establish a positive, respectful, and collaborative working relationship with your Minister, your Minister's staff and the public servants who provide the professional, non-partisan advice fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer, and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,



John Horgan  
Premier



Agriculture Legislation Overview

| Act  | Details   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Agricultural Land Commission Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Land Reserve General Regulation</li> <li>• Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation</li> </ul>  | <p>The Act defines the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and establishes the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) with the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve agricultural land;</li> <li>• Encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and</li> <li>• Encourage local governments, First Nations, the government, and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws, and policies.</li> </ul> <p>The Act describes the Commission’s procedures for determining when land is included in or exempted out of the Agricultural Land Reserve, when agricultural lands may be subdivided, and for approval of non-farm use or non-adhering residential use of agricultural land. Applications for non-farm use and subdivision of agricultural land may be delegated to public bodies or First Nations governments where the lands are within their respective jurisdictions.</p> |
| <p><i>Animal Health Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal Products and Byproducts Regulation</li> <li>• Bee Regulation</li> <li>• Enforcement Regulation</li> <li>• Fur Farm Regulation</li> <li>• Game Farm Regulation</li> <li>• Laboratory Fees Regulation</li> <li>• Livestock Licensing Regulation</li> <li>• Poultry Health and Buying Regulation</li> <li>• Reportable and Notifiable Disease Regulation</li> </ul> | <p>The <i>Animal Health Act</i> enables government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply effective control measures to a larger number of reportable and notifiable animal diseases;</li> <li>• Inspect animals, animal products and byproducts;</li> <li>• Protect certain data and information;</li> <li>• Make orders for the management of disease, or for the seizure and destruction of animals, animal products and byproducts to control the spread of a disease;</li> <li>• License a variety of operators engaged in business that relate to animals, animal products or animal byproducts.</li> <li>• Place greater accountability on persons responsible for animals to ensure that on-farm practices prevent the occurrence and spread of disease; and</li> </ul>   |

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| Act  | Details   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with industry and other governments to monitor animal health and to participate in health management and research programs. The Fur Farm Regulation was amended in 2021 to outline a phase out of mink farms. See Estimates Note on Mink and COVID-19 for more details.</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Farm Income Insurance Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farm Income Plans Regulation</li> </ul>  | The Act enables the establishment and administration of farm income plans, which are voluntary participation programs for British Columbia farmers designed to provide for the payment of money to reduce losses caused by price fluctuations such as low market return and escalating input costs.   |
| <i>Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board Regulation</li> <li>Specialty Farm Operations Regulation</li> </ul>  | The Act ensures that farmers can farm in the Agricultural Land Reserve by protecting them from nuisance lawsuits, nuisance bylaws and prohibitive injunctions when they are using normal farm practices. A board is established to deal with complaints about farm practices, including the ability to order a farmer to improve or to stop poor farm practices. The board builds on an existing peer review process to investigate and attempt to resolve disputes before hearings are held. |
| <i>Farmers and Womens Institutes Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers and Womens Institutes Act Regulation</li> </ul>  | Farmers' and Women's Institutes are rural organizations concerned with most aspects of farming industry and society from a community agriculture point of view. The Act describes the objects for which farmers' and women's institutes may be incorporated and provides a process for incorporation. It authorizes the appointment of a Superintendent of Farmers' Institutes.   |
| <i>Farming and Fishing Industries Development Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blueberry Industry Development Fund Regulation</li> <li>British Columbia Salmon Marketing Council Regulation</li> <li>British Columbia Wine Grape Council Regulation</li> <li>Cattle Industry Development Council Regulation</li> </ul> | The purpose of this Act is to enable producers of commodities of the farming and fishing industries to collect levies approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The minister establishes a council to administer the levy fund and apply those funds to promote and benefit their industries.   |

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| Act  | Details  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dairy Industry Development Council Regulation</li> <li>• Grain Industry Development Fund Regulation</li> <li>• Raspberry Industry Development Council Regulation</li> <li>• Woodlot Product Development Council Regulation</li> </ul>       |  |
| <p><i>Fish and Seafood Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulation</li> <li>• Enforcement Regulation</li> </ul>   | <p><i>Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible for the Act except as it relates to licensing respecting the growing of aquatic plants and the harvesting of wild aquatic plants.</i></p> <p>The Act ensures that any fish or aquatic plants that may be distributed to the public for human consumption meet food safety standards. The Act enables a licensing regime and creates an inspection and enforcement system to ensure licence holders are complying with the Act and with any terms or conditions of their licence. A range of punitive options ranging from administrative penalties to criminal charges are available. The Act also outlines record keeping and reporting requirements, and allows for reassessment, reconsideration, and review of orders. The minister is authorized to designate licensing officers, reviewing officers and inspectors.</p> |
| <p><i>Food and Agricultural Products Classification Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egg Grading and Standards Regulation</li> <li>• Enforcement Regulation</li> <li>• Organic Certification Regulation</li> <li>• Wines of Marked Quality Regulation</li> </ul> | <p>This Act provides a grading and classification system for food and agricultural products produced or distributed in B.C. based on quality, physical attributes, or method of production. The Act also allows for the creation of protected labels for prescribed products, such as requiring certification to be able to use the word “organic” in the marketing of organic products. The purpose of these provisions is to support and strengthen consumer confidence and decision-making. The Act also contains provisions for inspector appointments, duties, and responsibilities, reporting and record-keeping requirements, and compliance and enforcement.</p>   |
| <p><i>Food Safety Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meat Inspection Regulation</li> </ul>   | <p><i>The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible for the Act as it relates to food establishments where animals are slaughtered for food purposes.</i></p>   |

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| <b>Act</b>   | <b>Details</b>   |
|--|--|
|  | The Act requires operators of food establishments to be responsible for ensuring that their food is safe for human consumption. The Act provides for a licensing system for food establishments, and for the summary suspension or amendment of the licence if the operation of a food establishment poses a risk to human health or safety. Standards for establishments are set out in regulations. The appointment and powers of inspectors are described, including the ability to prohibit sales of food where operators have not complied with regulations. An inspector can seize and destroy food that is contaminated or unfit for human consumption and the minister may order a recall of such food that has been sold or distributed.  |
| <i>Insurance for Crops Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous Crop Insurance Regulation</li> </ul>              | The Act empowers the minister to enter into a crop insurance agreement with the federal government. Under this agreement, it also authorizes the establishment and administration of schemes of crop insurance in the province and the establishment of a crop insurance fund.   |
| <i>Livestock Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock Regulations</li> <li>• Pound Districts Regulation</li> </ul> | <p>The Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permits establishment of livestock districts where, with minor exceptions, livestock may run at large within the district boundaries;</li> <li>• Permits the establishment of Bull Control areas, which under the direction of a Bull Control Committee determine the number, breed, breeding, quality, and age of bulls allowed to run at large within the area; and</li> <li>• Permits the establishment of pound districts to allow keepers, peace officers and others to capture of animals at large within a specified area, and allows for the sale of unclaimed impounded animals and the reimbursement of the keeper.</li> </ul> <p>A Livestock Notice is also published under the Act, although it is not a regulation. It sets out bull control areas, livestock districts and pound districts.</p> |
| <i>Livestock Identification Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock Identification Regulation</li> </ul>          | The Act allows the livestock industry to establish a system for registration of brands in the province, for brand inspection and for the transfer of brands. The Act describes the powers of inspectors and includes a requirement to keep records of livestock transactions and to present such records to  |

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| Act   | Details   |
|---|---|
|   | inspectors upon request.  |
| <i>Livestock Lien Act</i>   | The Act creates a possessory lien in favour of every keeper of a livery, boarding or sale stable and every agistor of cattle holding any livestock or effects. An agistor is a person that feeds or pastures an animal for a fee. The lien on the livestock or effects left with them by their owners is for the value or price of food, care, attendance, or accommodation furnished for the livestock.  |
| <i>Local Government Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to Farm Regulation</li> </ul>  | <p><i>The Minister of Agriculture is responsible for s. 481 (1) and 551 – 554.</i></p> <p>The provisions dealing with farm bylaws are the administrative responsibility of the minister responsible for the <i>Farm Practices Protection Act</i>. These sections allow for the setting of provincial standards for local government (land use and farm) bylaws; enable the development of special bylaws for farming; and direct that local government bylaws be reviewed in relation to the provincial standards.</p>  |
| <i>Milk Industry Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dairy Plant Exception Regulation</li> <li>• Milk Industry Standards Regulation</li> </ul> | <p><i>The Minister of Agriculture is responsible for s. 12 as it relates to bulk tank milk grader licences, and the remainder of the Act</i></p> <p>The Act ensures the safety and quality of all milk and milk products by requiring certification of dairy farms and licensing of dairy plants. The Act also ensures that all milk sold comes from certified dairy farms and that all milk processed into dairy products, except for raw milk used in the production of certain specialty cheeses, is pasteurized. The Act also outlines the role of the B.C. Milk Marketing Board in determining payment to milk producers. The Act is supported by the Milk Industry Standards Regulation which details standards for cleanliness and quality during all phases of milk production and processing.</p> <p>The Minister of Agriculture issues bulk tank milk grader licences; the Minister of Health issues licences for persons operating or working in dairy plants.</p> |
| <i>Ministry of Agriculture and Food Act</i>   | <i>The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible for the Act except section 3 as that provision relates to the portfolio of the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and</i>  |

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| Act  | Details   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><i>Rural Development in relation to the treatment of the North American Gypsy Moth.</i></p> <p>Although the Ministry has changed names several times, this Act describes the purposes and functions of the Ministry, which include matters relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production, marketing, processing, and merchandising of agricultural products and food;</li> <li>• Institution and carrying out of advisory, research, promotional or education extension programs, projects or undertakings relating to agriculture and food; and</li> <li>• Collection of information and preparation of statistics relating to agriculture and food and the dissemination of these statistics as the minister considers advisable.</li> </ul> <p>The Act also empowers the minister to enter into agreements with other governments.</p> |
| <i>Ministry of Forests and Range Act</i>   | <p><i>s. 4(d)(ii) and (e) as those provisions relate to the portfolio of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries</i></p> <p>This section of the Act relates to government's responsibility to encourage an efficient and competitive ranching sector.</p>   |
| <p><i>Natural Products Marketing (B.C.) Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Columbia Broiler Hatching Egg Scheme</li> <li>• British Columbia Chicken Marketing Scheme, 1961</li> <li>• British Columbia Cranberry Marketing Scheme, 1968</li> <li>• B.C. Egg Marketing Board Powers and Duties Regulation No. 1</li> <li>• B.C. Egg Marketing Board Powers and Duties Regulation No. 3</li> <li>• British Columbia Egg Marketing Scheme, 1967</li> <li>• British Columbia Hog Marketing Scheme</li> </ul> | <p>The Act provides for a system of Schemes for individual commodities to promote, control and regulate production, transportation, packing, storage, and marketing of natural products in the province, including prohibition of that production, transportation, packing storage and marketing in whole or in part. The Act provides for the constitution of marketing boards and commissions under the Schemes and provides them powers vested by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. A supervisory and appellate Board, the British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board, is also created under the Act.</p> <p>There B.C. Egg Marketing Board Powers and Duties Regulation No. 2 was repealed.</p>  |

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| Act   | Details  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Columbia Milk Marketing Board Regulation</li> <li>• British Columbia Turkey Marketing Scheme</li> <li>• British Columbia Vegetable Scheme</li> <li>• Natural Products Marketing (B.C.) Act Regulations</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p><i>Plant Protection Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bacterial Ring Rot Regulation</li> <li>• Blueberry Maggot Control Regulation</li> <li>• Domestic Bacterial Ring Rot Regulation</li> <li>• Golden Nematode Regulation</li> <li>• Little Cherry Control Regulation</li> <li>• <b>Gypsy Moth Regulation responsibility of FLNRD</b></li> <li>• Japanese Beetle Regulation</li> </ul> | <p><i>The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible for the Act except as it relates to the treatment of the North American Gypsy Moth.</i></p> <p>The Act provides for the prevention of the spread of pests destructive to plants in British Columbia including the powers of inspectors and the authority to establish quarantine areas.</p>   |
| <p><i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation</li> <li>• Sled Dog Standards of Care Regulation</li> <li>• Cattery and Kennel Regulation</li> <li>• Animal Care Codes of Practice Regulation</li> </ul>  | <p>The Act ensures the humane treatment of animals by providing a legislative mandate for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in British Columbia. It outlines the membership, the constitution and powers of the society including the inspection powers of their officers, rights of seizure and disposal or sale of animals taken into custody. The Act identifies standards of care for animals, requirements for transporting animals, and duties of operators of regulated activities involving animals. The Act provides for specific protection of service animals and prohibits baiting and fighting of animals.</p> |
| <p><i>Seed Potato Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cariboo Certified Seed Potato Control Area Regulation</li> <li>• Pemberton Certified Seed Potato Control Area Regulation</li> <li>• Seed Potato Regulation</li> </ul>  | <p>The Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates the growing of certified seed potatoes;</li> <li>• Provides for the constitution of seed potato control areas, appointment of seed control committees (the functions, powers, and duties); and</li> <li>• Places restriction of growth of any but seed of a variety prescribed by the committee in a seed potato control area.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><i>Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act</i></p>  | <p><i>The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is responsible for s. 9.2.</i></p>   |

**ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**  
 Confidential Advice to Minister

| Act   | Details  |
|---|--|
|   | This section of the Act allows for the creation of a special account known as the Production Insurance Account that is used to fund government insurance payments under the <i>Insurance for Crops Act</i> .   |
| <i>Veterinarians Act</i>  | The Act provides a legislative framework for those practicing veterinary medicine in the province to regulate their qualifications, registration, standards of conduct and practice, and conduct investigations and disciplinary proceedings when required. The British Columbia Veterinary Medical Association is continued as the College of Veterinarians of British Columbia. The College may make bylaws, some of which must be approved by registrants. The College may certify technicians and establish bylaws related to the practice of aspects of veterinary medicine by technicians. |
| <i>Veterinary Drugs Act</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veterinary Drug and Medicated Feed Regulation</li> </ul> | The Act restricts the sale and manufacture of medicated feeds and veterinary drugs except by a pharmacist or a veterinarian licensed under this Act. The Act also allows for the inspection of premises on which medicated feeds or veterinary drugs are manufactured. The minister may prohibit the use of certain drugs if considered to be dangerous to a person or animal.   |

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## **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) - Commissioners and Panels**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **There are 15 Commissioners appointed to the ALC including Chair Jennifer Dyson.**
- **The Chair has appointed 2-3 Commissioners from each administrative region to serve on 6 Administrative Region Panels to decide on applications of all types (with a few exceptions).**
- **6 Commissioners also serve on a Soil and Fill Use Panel that decide on soil and fill use applications from all six (6) administrative regions.**
- **3 Commissioners also serve on a Film Panel to decide on non-farm use applications for filming with more than 60 filming days per calendar year from all six (6) administrative regions.**
- **Commissioners are appointed based on merit and their knowledge and experience in agricultural, local government, first nations government, or land use planning as set out in the ALC Act.**
- **~87% of the Commissioners (13 of 15) either own/operate or are involved in agricultural operations, including the production of livestock (beef, dairy, water buffalo, pigs & poultry), vegetables, forage, hazelnuts, grapes & other fruits for both local & global markets.**
- **~25% of the Commissioners (4 of 15) have experience in local government, agrology, biology, farm business advisory, and community services.**
- **The Commissioners have experience serving on other boards, councils and associations that are agricultural and land use planning related, such as;**
  - **BC Assessment**
  - **BC Council of Administrative Tribunals**
  - **Union of BC Municipalities**
  - **Farm Business Advisor**
  - **Environmental Appeal Board**
  - **BC Cattlemen Association**

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- **Agricultural Associations and Agricultural Advisory Committees within their communities.**
- **Mainland Milk Producers Association**
- **BC Dairy Association**
- **BC Egg Marketing Board**

**BACKGROUND:**

**Commission Chair**

**Jennifer Dyson**

- Appointed Chair of the Commission in May 2018 (~3.75 yrs).
- Previous Commissioner/Vice Chair 2008 to January 2017 (~8 yrs).
- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a water buffalo dairy and direct farm market in Port Alberni. Former member of Minister's Independent Committee on ALC/ALR Revitalization, Environmental Farm Plan Working Group, and Island Agri-Food Initiative; Co-founder of Island Farmer's Alliance, Western Women's rep appointed by BC Agriculture Council to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and former executive director of the Agricultural Workforce Policy Board.

**South Coast Panel (3 Members)**

**Ione Smith**

- Appointed to Commission October 2017 (~4yrs);
- Appointed Vice Chair October 2018
- Sunshine Coast Regional District
- Registered Professional Agrologist and Farm Business Advisor in Sechelt, member of BC Food Systems Network Steering Committee.

**Susan Gimse**

- Appointed to the Commission October 2018 (~ 3yrs)
- Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a 130-acre livestock and tree fruit operation in Pemberton.
- Past Chair of the Squamish Lillooet Regional District, Director of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Executive of the Union of BC Municipalities, and BC Assessment Appeal Board member.

**Holger Schwichtenberg**

- Appointed to the Commission March 2021 (~ 1yr)
- Fraser Valley Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a ~168-acre dairy farm with 160 cows in Agassiz

- Chair of the BC Dairy Association. Past Director of the Mainland Milk Producers Association and councilor in the District of Kent.

**Island Panel (2 Members)**

**Linda Michaluk**

- Appointed to the Commission as Vice Chair January 2018 (~4 yrs)
- Capital Regional District
- Former Mayor of North Saanich, current member on the Board of the BC Council of Administrative Tribunals. Former registered Professional Biologist and Executive Director of the Collage of Applied Biology of BC. Environmental Appeal Board member.

**Jennifer Woike**

- Appointed to the Commission October 2021 (~4 months)
- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a farm which consists of an egg grading facility, 35-acre hazelnut orchard, and 50+ head cow/calf operation
- Previously served as Vice Chair, Chair of Communications and Marketing Committee, Chair of the Production Management Committee as well as the National Alternate to the Egg Farmers of Canada Board.

**Okanagan Panel (3 Member)**

**Gerald Zimmermann**

- Appointed to the Commission as Vice Chair October 2014 (~7 yrs)
- Central Okanagan Regional District
- Grape grower in Kelowna; Former City of Kelowna Fire Chief and Municipal Councilor; Current trustee with Black Mountain Irrigation District.
- Previously served on the Commission 2008 to 2010 (2 years)

**Joseph Dueling**

- Appointed to the Commission December 2019 (~ 2 yrs)
- Regional District of the North Okanagan
- Family owned/operated farm that produces berries and fruit, cattle, pigs, bees, and chickens.
- Practicing lawyer in Lumby

**Jerry Thibeault**

- Appointed to the Commission October 2018 to present (~3.5 yr)
- Appointed by the ALC Chair to the Okanagan Panel in June 2021
- Previously served on the Commission from 2008 to 2015 (7 yrs)
- East Kootenay Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a ranch in Cranbrook, former livestock inspector, and former Committee Chair with the Kootenay Livestock Association.

**Interior Panel (2 Members)**

**Richard Mumford**

- Appointed to the Commission October 2014 (~7 yrs);
- Appointed Vice Chair January 2016
- Cariboo Regional District
- Serves on both the Kootenay and Interior Panel
- Owner/Operator of a cattle ranch in Alexis Creek and contractor with the BC Cattlemen's Association. Former manager with the Ministry of Forests and Director of a timber harvesting company

**Bob Haywood Farmer**

- Appointed to the Commission January 2017 (~5 yrs)
- Thompson Nicola Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a mid-size cattle ranch in Savona, Director of the Kamloops Stock Association, member of the Tunkwa Lake Stock Association, BC Cattlemen's Association, and President of Grasslands Conservation Council of BC.

**Kootenay Panel (3 Members)**

**Richard Mumford**

- Appointed by ALC Chair as Vice Chair of the Kootenay Panel in October 2020
- See Interior Panel for background

**Ian Knudsen**

- Appointed to the Commission October 2014 to present (~7 yrs)
- from the East Kootenay Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a livestock, grain, and produce farm in Creston. Member of the BC Cattlemen Association and the Creston Valley Beef Growers Association.

**Jerry Thibeault**

- Appointed to the Commission October 2018 to present (~3 yr)
- See Okanagan Panel for background

**North Panel (3 Members)**

**Janice Tapp**

- Appointed to the Commission as Vice Chair October 2018 (~3 yr)
- Bulkley-Nechako Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a cattle ranch in Fraser Lakes, President of the Nechako Valley Regional Cattlemen's Association, Vice President of the Fort Fraser Livestock Association, and Secretary/Treasurer for the BC Hereford Association.

**Andrew Adams**

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- Appointed to the Commission October 2018 (~3 yr)
- Fraser Fort George Regional District
- Owner/Operator of a certified organic mixed vegetable farm in Prince George, Eaglet Lake Farmers Institute Secretary, and a Director of District C for the Central Interior Farmers Institute.

**Karen McKean**

- Appointed to the Commission May 2020 (~1.75 yrs)
- Peace River Regional District
- Family owned/operated ranch between Fort St. John and Hudson’s Hope, Regional Secretary for Peace River Cattlemen’s Association, contributing writer for “Beef In BC”. Part-time log scaler for local mills, received Forest Resource Technology Diploma from BCIT.

**Soil and Fill Panel (6 Members)**

**Jennifer Dyson** (Commission Chair)

**Robert Haywood Farmer** (Interior Administrative Region)

**Rick Mumford** (Interior Administrative Region)

**Susan Gimse** (South Coast Administrative Region)

**Gerald Zimmermann** (Okanagan Administrative Region)

**Karen McKean** (North Administrative Region)

**The Film Panel (3 Members)**

**Jennifer Dyson** (Commission Chair)

**Bob Haywood Farmer** (Interior Administrative Region)

**Ione Smith** (South Coast Administrative Region)

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## **Land Included into, and Excluded from, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) by Fiscal Year**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **As of February 2022, the area of the ALR is 4,612,527 ha.**
- **The ALR has decreased by a net of 343 ha April 1, 2021 to February 2022.**
- **Since 2012, the ALR has decreased by 10,762 ha resulting from:**
  - **Exclusion decisions of the Commission**
  - **Permanent or temporary exclusion by Cabinet for Site C**
  - **First Nations treaty settlements (Tla'amin Final Agreement).**
- **Non-application related boundary changes such as cabinet exclusion, boundary reviews, and First Nation treaty settlements represent 66% of the total land excluded from the ALR since 2012.**
- **The majority of the lands, both excluded from and included to the ALR since 2001, were mixed & secondary agriculture capability (Class 4, 5, 6).**
- **Changes to the ALR boundary this fiscal to date (April 1, 2021 – February 7, 2022) by Administrative Region:**
  - **Interior: 10 hectares included, 43 hectares excluded**
  - **Island: 1 hectare included, 34 hectares excluded**
  - **Kootenay: 126 hectares excluded**
  - **North: 20 hectares included, 110 hectares excluded**
  - **Okanagan: 3 hectares include, 16 hectares excluded**
  - **South Coast: 4 hectares included, 54 hectares excluded**

Confidential Advice to Minister

- **As of September 30, 2020, only the Province, local governments, First Nation governments, and other prescribed bodies who own the land or have jurisdiction over the lands may apply for exclusion.**
- **Since September 30, 2020, the ALC has received 13 exclusion applications under the new exclusion legislation. Exclusion applications were received from the Okanagan, Kootenay, Island, North, and South Coast Regions.**

**BACKGROUND:**

| Fiscal Year   | Inclusions**<br>(ha) | Exclusions**<br>(ha) | Net Change**<br>(ha) | Current Total ALR<br>(ha) |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| April 1, 2012 |                      |                      |                      | 4,623,289                 |
| 2012/13       | 238                  | 1,709                | - 1,471              | 4,621,818                 |
| 2013/14       | 1,296                | 1,958                | - 662                | 4,621,156                 |
| 2014/15       | 792                  | 1,090                | - 298                | 4,620,858                 |
| 2015/16       | 79                   | 4,283                | - 4,204              | 4,616,654                 |
| 2016/17       | 198                  | 943                  | - 745                | 4,615,909                 |
| 2017/18       | 223                  | 2,970                | - 2,747              | 4,613,162                 |
| 2018/19       | 65                   | 212                  | - 147                | 4,613,015                 |
| 2019/20       | 127                  | 238                  | - 111                | 4,612,904                 |
| 2020/21       | 103                  | 137                  | -34                  | 4,612,870                 |
| 2021/22*      | 39                   | 382                  | -343                 | 4,612,527                 |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>3,160</b>         | <b>13,922</b>        | <b>-10,762</b>       | <b>4,612,527</b>          |

\*these figures are as of February 7, 2022.

\*\*these figures report the year a change takes effect; NOT the year a decision is made.

- These figures reflect data from the ALC GIS database and include changes in the ALR as a result of exclusion and inclusion application decisions of the Commission, ALR boundary changes made by Government and other changes due to mapping errors.
- The ALR area at designation was calculated using manual methods (Dot Matrix or Electronic Planimeter). Starting April 1, 2012, the ALR stats were mapped and calculated using GIS. The change in how the ALR is mapped resulted in a 136,649 ha decrease in the ALR effective the change to GIS, as noted below:
  - ALR reported as of March 31, 2012 was 4,759,938 ha (OATS figures).

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- ALR reported as of April 1, 2012 was 4,623,289 ha (GIS figures).

**Non-application related changes in the ALR of note:**

- In 2013/14, the ALC initiated a block exclusion in the Regional District of East Kootenay that included 684 ha and excluded 1545 ha from the ALR, for a net change of -861 ha.
- In April 2015, Order in Council No. 148 permanently excluded 2,775 ha and temporarily excluded an additional 941 ha of land from the ALR for Site C Dam.
- In April 2016, the Tla'amin Final Agreement Act directed exclusion of 935.8 ha of ALR land.
- In 2017/18, the ALC initiated two block exclusions in the Regional District of East Kootenay that excluded a total of 2,865 ha from the ALR.
- In February 2022, Order-in-Council No. 53 temporarily excluded 101.5 ha of land from the ALR for development (gravel extraction and road) associated with the Site C Dam.

**Applications received under new exclusion legislation since September 30, 2020:**

- The ALC has received six (6) exclusion applications from the Regional District of East Kootenay
- The ALC has received one (1) exclusion application from each of the following local governments:
  - Village of Nakusp
  - City of Kelowna
  - City of Salmon Arm
  - Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
  - District of North Cowichan
  - Bulkley-Nechako Regional District
  - Metro Vancouver

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## **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) - Application Processing Timelines**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **The ALC has performance timeline targets for: acknowledging receipt of applications, releasing decisions, and notifying applicants on the release of their decision.**
- **The ALC is an administrative tribunal. The ALC must adhere to principles of administrative law and fairness when engaging with evidence and deciding on an application which requires time.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022, the ALC received 306 applications.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022, the ALC released 261 decisions.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022, 77% of decisions were released within 90 business days (Target 90%).**
- **Between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022, 100% of decisions were provided to applicants within 5 days of the decision being finalized.**
- **Reasons that application and decisions targets are not met:**
  - **The performance targets do not account for the administrative tribunal nature of applications e.g. complexity of applications, volume of evidence, affected party involvement, matters of procedural fairness, and statutory requirements of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA)* and its regulations.**
  - **Issuing decisions is only one part of the work of the ALC and is balanced with other work including: requests for reconsideration, issuing statutory right of way notifications for Land Title Survey Authority, responding to public inquiries, decision condition compliance, regulatory interpretation, outreach and engagement with government ministries, First Nations and other stakeholders.**
  - **High level of staff turnover & vacancies this fiscal and the time needed to hire and train new staff: 11 of 15 staff that handle applications are new to ALC and or their role with the ALC this fiscal.**

**BACKGROUND:**

- The ALC has had performance targets for timelines associated with processing ALC applications since April 1, 2016.
- The ALC may “pause” processing timelines for applicant meetings, site visits, requests for additional information, and at request of the applicant.

**CURRENT FISCAL (APRIL 1, 2021 TO FEBRUARY 9, 2022) STATISTICS**

- 306 new applications were received between April 1, 2021 to February 9, 2022
- 86% of applications were acknowledged received within five business days of receipt of the application (Target: 100%).
- 48% of the decisions were released within 60 business days of acknowledgement of receipt (Target: 90%) and 78% of the decisions were released within 90 business days.
- The reasons for applications exceeding targets varies based on # and complexity of applications per region but were due on large part this fiscal to a high degree of staff turnover, hiring delays and time needed for new hires to become familiar with the work of the ALC.
- 100% of decisions were provided to applicants within five business days of a decision being released.

**PREVIOUS FISCAL 2020/2021(APRIL 1, 2020 TO MARCH 31, 2021) STATISTICS:**

- 378 new applications were received in the 2020/2021 fiscal year
- 86% of the decisions were released within 60 business days of acknowledgement of the application (Target: 90%) and 95% of decisions were released within 90 business days
- 100% of decisions were provided to applicants within five business days of a decision being released.

**3 YEAR TREND - APPLICATION PROCESSING TIMELINE STATISTICS:**

| Fiscal Year                     | Applications Received | Decisions Released | Decisions Released Within 60 Days (%) | Decisions Released Within 90 Days (%) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2021/2022 (as of Feb 9, 2022)   | 306                   | 261                | 48%                                   | 77%                                   |
| 2020/2021 (April 1 to March 31) | 378                   | 373                | 86%                                   | 95%                                   |
| 2019/2020 (April 1 to March 31) | 380                   | 446                | 57%                                   | 81%                                   |

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## **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) – Application Types and Volumes by Fiscal Year**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **A landowner may submit an application to the ALC to subdivide or conduct a land use that is not expressly permitted by the ALC Act and or its Regulations.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022, the ALC made 274 decisions (including decisions made on reconsideration) by type:**
  - **Non-Farm Use – 95 (33% of all application types) consisting of:**
    - **General Non-Farm Use - 46 (16% of all application types, 48% of Non-Farm Use applications)**
    - **Transportation, Utility and Recreational Trail - 46 (16% of all application types, 48% of Non-Farm Use applications)**
    - **Delegated Oil and Gas Non-Farm Use – 3 (1% of all application types, 3% of Non-Farm Use Applications)**
  - **Non-Adhering Residential Use – 77 (27% of all application types)**
  - **Subdivision – 57 (20% of all application types)**
  - **Soil and Fill Use – 25 (9% of all application types)**
  - **Exclusion – 22 (8% of all application types)**
  - **Inclusion – 7 (2 % of all application types)**
- **The ALC has APPROVED 225 applications (79%) of all application types decided from April 1, 2021 to February 9, 2022.**
- **Approvals by application type from April 1, 2021 to February 9, 2022:**
  - **93% of all Non-Farm Use applications were approved, consisting of:**
    - **General Non-Farm Use – 87% were approved**
    - **Delegated OGC Non-farm Use – 100% were approved**
    - **Transportation & Corridor Use – 98% were approved**
  - **79% of Non-Adhering Residential Use applications were approved**
  - **63% of Subdivision applications were approved**
  - **72% of Soil and Fill Use applications were approved**
  - **68% of Exclusion applications were approved**
  - **100% of Inclusion applications were approved**

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- **Each application is considered based on its individual merits and the evidence provided with the application which makes it difficult to predict the outcome.**
- **A number of resources are available on the ALC’s website to provide guidance to applicants on what the Commission typically considerations when deciding on applications.**

**BACKGROUND:**

- The ALC Act, ALR General Regulation and ALR Use Regulation outline the permitted uses within the ALR. A landowner, local government, or first nation government may make an application to the ALC to conduct a use that is not permitted by the ALC Act and ALR Regulations.
- Under section 25(1.1) (b) of the ALC Act, the ALC must not grant permission for a non-adhering residential use unless the additional residence is necessary for agriculture.
- Non-adhering residential use became an application type on February 22, 2019. From February 22, 2019 to February 9, 2022, the ALC has decided on 260 non-adhering residential use applications; 195 (75%) were approved.
- Applications are submitted electronically through the ALC’s Application Portal directly to local governments who must direct an application to the ALC by resolution before the application is received and considered by the ALC.
- Applications made to the ALC may be decided by the Executive Committee (i.e. applications of provincial importance), a Panel (i.e. based on geography or application type), or CEO. The majority of applications are decided by Administrative Region Panels.
- The ALC may decide to refuse, approve, or approve an alternate proposal for each application. An approved application may or may not have conditions.
- Since 2016/2017 the ALC decisions have ranged between 362 to 446 per year:
  - on average, 66% of decisions were approved.
  - on average, 34% of decisions were refused.

| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>Prepared by:</b> | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
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## Compliance and Enforcement at the ALC/Statistics

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **The ALC Compliance and Enforcement (C&E) Program was established in 2007 in response to increasing complaints of non-compliant activities in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).**
- **When first established the ALC had only 2 C&E officers. Today, the C&E Program consists of 6 Officers (including one supervisor) and one (1) C&E Application Advisor.**
- **One (1) officer is based in Nanaimo, one (1) officer is based in Kamloops, one (1) officer is based in Kelowna, and three (3) officers are based in Burnaby.**
- **1 additional officer will be hired next fiscal (2022/2023)- based in the Okanagan (posted).**
- **Over a two-week period in late November early December, three ALC officers assisted the Abbotsford Emergency Operation Centre with emergency flood response along with other Ministry staff.**

### BACKGROUND:

- The purpose of the program is to strengthen delivery of the ALC's legislative mandate to ensure that activities taking place within the ALR are consistent with the ALC Act. This is achieved by using a combination of education, promotional information and enforcement.
- From 2007-2016, C&E was comprised of two C&E officers. In 2016, the C&E officer contingent was increased to five officers plus a person dedicated to the processing of incoming complaints from the public and referrals from local government.
- In 2019 two additional officers were hired, one is based in Nanaimo and one in Kamloops. One officer (C&E Supervisor) moved to Kelowna in 2017 and 3 officers are based in Burnaby.
- The ALC is in the process hiring one additional C&E officer based in the Okanagan to bring the ALC back to full compliment.
- The ALC's C&E Advisor position is vacant and is also posted.
- Natural Resource Information System is used to track inspections and related C&E follow-up. Since 2016, ALC enforcement orders and penalties are listed on the publicly accessible Natural Resource C&E Database. Both systems are used by C&E staff in FLNRORD, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Energy Mines & Low Carbon Innovation, BC Parks, and the Environmental Assessment Office.

|                                      | 2019/2020 | 2020/2021 | 2021/2022<br>(Apr 1- Dec 31,<br>2021) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Active files Start of Fiscal</b>  | 344       | 477       | <b>588</b>                            |
| <b>Incoming Complaints/referrals</b> | 381       | 310       | <b>204</b>                            |
| <b>Files Closed</b>                  | 245       | 200       | <b>192</b>                            |
| <b>Active Files End of Fiscal</b>    | 476       | 587       | <b>600*</b>                           |
| <b>Property Inspections</b>          | 310       | 194       | <b>233</b>                            |
| <b>Compliance Actions</b>            | 239       | 234       | <b>161</b>                            |
| <b>Enforcement Orders</b>            | 30        | 17        | <b>10</b>                             |

\*as of December 31, 2021

- The number of actions taken are down from 2019-2020 due to officer vacancies this past fiscal.
- From the beginning of the 2021-2022 fiscal year to December 31, 2021, 1% of all active C&E files resulted in an enforcement order (10 orders/792 active files). Comparatively, in the last fiscal 17 enforcement orders (2% of files) were issued.
- As of December 31, 2021, there are currently 600 active complaints and referrals. Compared to a total of 587 at the end of last fiscal year, the active file load is currently 2% higher.
- As of December 31, 2021, the total number of C&E files closed is 192. Compared to 200 at the end of the 2020-2021 fiscal year. We estimate by end of current fiscal we will close over 250 files which will be 25% increase from previous fiscal.
- As of December 31, 2021, regional distribution of active C&E files follows population density, where 49% (293) of all files are in the South Coast region, 21% (124) in the Okanagan region, and 18% (109) in the Island region (600 total).
- From the April 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, the breakdown by primary contravention type for all active C&E files was: 43% (341) fill, 35% (277) illegal commercial activity, 12% (98) residential, and 4% (28) each for extraction and 'other' (792 total).

| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>Prepared by:</b>    | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| CEO – Kim Grout          | Name: Avtar S. Sundher | Name: Dave Birchmore      |
| Date approved: Feb-8- 22 | Branch: ALC            | Branch: ALC               |
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## **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) – Non-Adhering Residential Use Applications by Fiscal Year**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **A “non-adhering residential use” application is required for:**
  - **A principal residence larger than 500 m<sup>2</sup> total floor area**
  - **An additional residence**
  - **Tourist accommodation that exceeds the criteria in the ALR Use Regulation**
- **The ALC Act specifies that the ALC must not approve an additional residence unless it is necessary for farm use.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022, the ALC approved 79% (61 of 77) of non-adhering residential use applications.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 – February 9, 2022, the ALC approved 79% (54 of 68) of Additional Residence applications:**
  - **93% of applications for Temporary Farm Worker Housing were approved.**
  - **73% of applications for full-time farm use were approved.**
  - **84% of applications for landowners to reside in their existing residence while constructing a new one residence were approved.**
- **The ALC created a streamlined process for Temporary Foreign Worker Housing registered in the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. On average, these decisions are released within 16 days.**
- **Between April 1, 2021 – February 9, 2022 the ALC approved 78% (7 of 9) Principal residence larger than 500 m<sup>2</sup> applications.**
- **On December 31, 2021, the ALR Use Regulation was amended to allow landowners to construct an additional residence if:**
  - **The principal residence is not greater than 500 m<sup>2</sup> total floor area; and**
  - **There is only one residence on the property; and**
  - **The additional residence is 90 m<sup>2</sup> or less if the parcel is 40 ha or less, or**
  - **The additional residence is 186 m<sup>2</sup> or less if the parcel is more than 40 ha**
- **It is too soon to know the impact these changes will have on the number of non-adhering residential use applications received by the Commission.**

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Bill 52**

- On February 22, 2019, Bill 52 amended the ALC Act to restrict the size and number of residences on an ALR property. The change to the ALC Act and ALR Use Regulation imposed a maximum residence size of 500 m<sup>2</sup>, removed the authority for local governments to approve additional residences and requires all non-adhering residential uses (additional residences and Principal residences larger than 500m<sup>2</sup>) to be approved by the ALC prior to construction.
- Section 25(1.1)(b) of the ALC Act states that the ALC must not grant permission for a non-adhering residential use unless the additional residence is necessary for farm use.

### **Residential Flexibility**

- The ALR Use Regulation was amended by OIC 438/2021(July 12, 2021), effective December 31, 2021, to permit the construction of one additional residence per parcel, subject to specific criteria, and to end the prior permission under the ALR Use Regulation for manufactured homes for family members.
- The total floor area of an additional residence constructed after December 31, 2021 must be 90 m<sup>2</sup> or less if the parcel is 40 ha or less, and 186 m<sup>2</sup> or less if the parcel is more than 40 ha, in order to comply with the ALR Use Regulation, though a local government or First Nation Government may prohibit or further restrict total floor area under its bylaws: ALR Use Regulation, s. 34.3.
- Prior to December 31, 2021, the regulations contained provisions facilitating the construction of manufactured homes for immediate family members. These provisions are no longer provided for in ALR Use Regulation, with the exception of some grandfathering protection for pre-existing structures of these kinds.

### **Additional Residences**

- 54 of 68 Additional Residence Applications were approved between April 1, 2021 and February 9, 2022.
  - 13 of 14 of applications for Temporary Farm Worker Housing were approved.
  - 24 of 33 of applications for full-time farm use were approved.
  - 16 of 19 of applications for landowners to reside in their existing residence while constructing a new one residence were approved.
  - No applications (0 of 1) for non-farm related additional residences were approved.
  - One application (1 of 1) for minor deviation from the regulation was approved.
    - The proposal was for retaining the manufactured home which was the existing principal residence while constructing the new principal

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residence. This application was required due to the issue of order of placement.

**2021/2022 NARU STATISTICS (APRIL 1, 2021 – FEBRUARY 9, 2022):**

| <b>Regional NARU Decisions April 1, 2021 – February 9, 2022</b> |                 |                |                        |  |
|---|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|--|
|   | <b>Approved</b> | <b>Refused</b> | <b>Total Decisions</b> | <b>% of NARU Applications Approved</b> |
| Interior  | 6               | 1              | 7                      | 86%                                    |
| Island  | 5               | 1              | 6                      | 83%                                    |
| Kootenay  | 6               | 0              | 6                      | 100%                                   |
| North   | 3               | 1              | 4                      | 75%                                    |
| Okanagan  | 8               | 4              | 12                     | 67%                                    |
| South Coast   | 33              | 9              | 42                     | 79%                                    |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>61</b>       | <b>16</b>      | <b>77</b>              | <b>79%</b>                             |

- The South Coast and Okanagan received the most non-adhering residential use applications.

**PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR: 2020/2021 NARU STATISTICS (APRIL 1, 2020 TO MARCH 31, 2021):**

| <b>Regional NARU Decisions Previous Fiscal Year 2020/2021 (April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021)</b> |                 |                |                        |  |
|--|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|--|
|  | <b>Approved</b> | <b>Refused</b> | <b>Total Decisions</b> | <b>% of NARU Applications Approved</b> |
| Interior   | 6               | 0              | 6                      | 100%                                   |
| Island   | 4               | 6              | 10                     | 40%                                    |
| Kootenay   | 5               | 1              | 6                      | 83%                                    |
| North  | 3               | 0              | 3                      | 100%                                   |
| Okanagan   | 30              | 6              | 36                     | 83%                                    |
| South Coast  | 35              | 15             | 50                     | 70%                                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>83</b>       | <b>28</b>      | <b>111</b>             | <b>75%</b>                             |

- In 2020/2021 Fiscal year, the ALC decided on 111 non-adhering residential use applications
  - 75% of all non-adhering residential use applications were approved
  - Non-adhering residential use applications decided by the ALC by type:
    - Additional residences: 82% approved (90 total)
    - Principal residence larger than 500m<sup>2</sup>: 39% approved (18 total)
    - Tourist accommodation: 67% approved (3 total)

|                                  |                                    |   |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Approved by:</b><br>Kim Grout | <b>Prepared by:</b><br>Zeyaad Omar | <b>Alternate Contact:</b><br>Liz Sariolgu |
| Date approved: Feb-10-22         | Branch: ALC                        | Branch: ALC                               |
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## **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)- Notice of Intent Notice of Intent for Soil and Fill Use**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- On February 22, 2019, the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation was approved by B.C.'s Lieutenant Governor in Council, bringing into force new Notice of Intent (NOI) requirements for soil and fill use.
- With very few exceptions, NOIs are required for the placement of fill or removal of soil (including aggregate) in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- NOIs are to be decided by the CEO or their delegate and by legislation must be responded to within 60 calendar days of receiving the NOI and prescribed fee or the works can proceed without condition or oversight.
- As of January 26, 2022, 137 NOIs have been received this fiscal and 158 NOIs have been decided.
- The number of NOIs received to date this fiscal are 13% lower than the same time-period last fiscal - likely due to emergency flooding in the province. The number of NOIs decided this fiscal have increased by 28% over the previous fiscal.
- Of the 158 NOIs decided on in 2021/22, 117 (74%) were approved, 24 (15%) were ordered not to proceed and to make a Soil or Fill use application to the Commission, and 17 (11%) were withdrawn or cancelled.
- 97% of NOIs received this fiscal have been responded to within 60 calendar days; a 7% increase from the previous fiscal.
- 3 new FTE's had to be hired in 2019 and 2 new FTE's in 2021 to handle all the inquiries and processing of this new decision type for the Commission.

**BACKGROUND:**

- “Fill” is defined in the ALCA as “any material brought onto agricultural land other than materials exempted by the regulations”
- “Soil” by definition. includes the entire mantle of unconsolidated material above bedrock other than minerals defined in the *Mineral Tenure Act*.
- Only in very limited circumstances, which are expressly identified in the ALR Use Regulation, can fill placement or removal of soil or aggregate be undertaken without interaction with the ALC via a NOI or a Soil or Fill Use Application.
- NOI decisions are made by the CEO or their delegate.
- The CEO or their delegate has 60 days to respond to a NOI.
- The cost of submitting an NOI is \$150, paid to the Minister of Finance.
- NOIs ordered not to proceed must submit a Soil or Fill Use Application for consideration by the Commission in accordance with section 20.3(5) of the ALCA.
- NOIs this fiscal by type as of January 26, 2022 (based on the decision letter release date):

| <b>NOI Primary Type</b>                  | <b>2021/2022</b> |
|--|------------------|
| Alcohol Production                       | 6                |
| Equestrian Facility                      | 3                |
| Farm Building - Intensive Livestock      | 5                |
| Farm Building - Cannabis                 | 3                |
| Farm Building - Greenhouse               | 6                |
| Farm Building - Processing               | 0                |
| Farm Building - Other                    | 4                |
| Farm Retail Sales                        | 2                |
| Farm Road                                | 15               |
| Area wide Fill placement for Farm Use    | 42               |
| Area wide Fill placement for Landscaping | 6                |
| Kennel                                   | 0                |
| Residential - Accessory Structures       | 7                |
| Residential - Additional                 | 3                |
| Residential - Driveway                   | 11               |
| Residential - Principal                  | 8                |
| Telecommunications Towers                | 6                |
| Soil Removal                             | 2                |
| Other                                    | 15               |
| Gravel/Sand Extraction                   | 14               |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>158</b>       |

| <b>Approved by:</b>     | <b>Prepared by:</b> | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Name: Kim Grout         | Name: Katie Cox     | Name: Avtar Sundher       |
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## **Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) - Agri-Industrial Use Applications**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **The ALR Use Regulation permits some agri-industrial uses in the ALR without requiring an application to the ALC.**
- **Permitted agri-industrial activities in the ALR include:**
  - **Storing, packing, preparing, and processing farm products if at least 50% of the farm products are from the farm, or a co-operative.**
  - **Alcohol production if the farm parcel produces and harvests at least 2 hectares of the primary farm product (grapes, fruit, honey) and the remainder of the 50% is contracted from another BC farm.**
- **Other permitted activities in the ALR that may be related to industrial uses subject to local government zoning bylaws include: temporary sawmills & home occupation uses**
- **Landowners may apply to the ALC if they want to conduct an agri-industrial use that isn't expressly permitted in the ALR regulation.**
- **Examples of agri-industrial applications approved by the ALC in past 5 years (2017-2022):**
  - **3 Feed mills (Salmon Arm, Chilliwack, and Spallumcheen)**
  - **1 Fruit packing and cold storage (Osoyoos)**
  - **1 Federal-inspected beef abattoir (Surrey)**
  - **1 Poultry processing facility (Port Alberni)**
  - **Expansion of 1 processing facility that processes local beef, veal, lambs and goats (Chilliwack)**
  - **3 Sawmills (Strathcona Regional District, North Okanagan Regional District, and Village of Radium Hot Springs)**
  - **Expansion of 1 Milk processing facility (Abbotsford)**
  - **1 On-farm biogas facility (City of Chilliwack)**
  - **1 mobile juicing facility (Coldstream)**
- **ALC's rationale to approve agri-industrial uses have included:**
  - **The use is associated with agriculture on the property**
  - **The use is beneficial to local & regional farms or BC producers**
  - **The use does not impede agricultural use of remainder of the parcel**
  - **The use does not utilize prime agricultural land**
  - **The use is re-purposing existing buildings for new agri-industrial use**
  - **Associated infrastructure could be re-purposed for other uses permitted in the ALR**
  - **The location is easily accessible to farmers**

- **The ALC has approved some areas that are expressly set aside for agri-industrial food processing to develop and operate within the ALR.**
  - **E.g. Chilliwack Agri-Industrial Park Non-farm use approval**
    - **35.5 ha of ALR land**
    - **All land approved is not yet utilized and land remains available for agri-industrial uses**

## **BACKGROUND:**

- Permitted farm product storing, packing, preparing, and processing cannot be prohibited by a local government if:
  - at least 50% of the farm product is produced on the farm or by a cooperative, or
  - is feed required for farm use.
- "farm product" means a commodity that is produced from a farm use but does not include water. Eg. Vegetables, fruit, livestock, crops, etc
- Permitted alcohol production facilities cannot be prohibited by a local government if:
  - at least 50% of the primary farm product is harvested from the land on which the alcohol production facility is located, or
  - harvested from the land and other land in BC under a contract (min. three years).
- "primary farm product" means the farm product that is the primary ingredient used in a fermentation process to make an alcohol product.
- Examples of agri-industrial applications approved by the ALC in past 5 years:
  - Meadow Valley Meats - processing expansion (File: 61762 – City of Pitt Meadows)
  - Sawmill (File: 61618 – Strathcona Regional District, File: 62033, North Okanagan Regional District, and File: 58204, Village of Radium Hotsprings)
  - Vitalus Milk Processing (File: 61323 – City of Abbotsford)
  - Dicklands On-Farm Biogas (File: 60992 – City of Chilliwack)
  - Feed mills (File: 60537 - Salmon Arm, File: 56727 – Chilliwack, and File: 61408 Spallumcheen)
  - Fruit packing and cold storage (File: 57890 - Osoyoos)
  - Federal-inspected beef abattoir (File 54999 – City of Surrey)
  - Poultry processing (File: 56717 - Port Alberni)
  - Mobile juicing (File: 61846 – District of Coldstream)

## **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Ontario – *Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas*
  - General commercial and industrial should be located outside of prime industrial areas.
  - "Agriculture related uses" include farm-related commercial and industrial uses with a recommendation they do not exceed more than 2% lot coverage.
  - Agriculture related uses in prime agricultural areas must meet criteria:

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- Be farm related uses - may include farm product processing, abattoirs, feed mills, grain dryers, cold/dry storage facilities, fertilizer storage, food and beverage processors and agricultural biomass pelletizers
- Be compatible with, and not impair, surrounding agricultural operations
- Directly related to farm operations in the area
- Supports agriculture
- Provides products or services to farm operations is the business's primary activity
- Benefits from being in close proximity to farm operations

| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>Prepared by:</b>  | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Name: Kim Grout, CEO     | Name: Shannon Lambie | Name: Liz Sarioglu        |
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## **Non-Farm Use Applications**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **The ALR Use Regulation outlines permitted farm uses and permitted non-farm uses that do not require an application to the ALC.**
- **A landowner may apply to the ALC to conduct a land use that exceeds the thresholds permitted in Use Regulation or is not expressly permitted by the ALC Act and or its Regulations.**
- **The ALC must evaluate each non-farm use on its merits and ensure that the integrity of the ALR is protected if the application is approved.**
- **As of February 9, 2022, the ALC has received 53 Non-Farm Use applications consisting of:**
  - **50 General Non-Farm Use Applications**
  - **3 Delegated Oil and Gas Non-Farm Use Applications**
- **As of February 9, 2022, 93% of Non-Farm Use applications decided this fiscal were approved, consisting of:**
  - **General Non-Farm Use – 87% were approved (46)**
  - **Delegated OGC Non-farm Use – 100% were approved (3)**
- **Non-farm use decision considerations include:**
  - **Whether the use is supportive of, or related to agriculture**
  - **Whether the use is compatible with surrounding agricultural uses**
  - **Whether the use has a temporary or permanent impact on arable land**
  - **Whether the land could be used for agriculture**
  - **Whether it is appropriate to locate the use in the ALR**
- **Examples of non-farm use applications approved by category this fiscal:**
  - 1) **Agriculture or Farm Related that exceed permitted thresholds- E.g. feed mills, milk & poultry processing facilities, anaerobic digesters**
  - 2) **Civic/Institutional - E.g. community care facility, portable classrooms, public works yard**
  - 3) **Commercial - E.g. special events, trailer repair shop, campgrounds**

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- 4) **Industrial - E.g. temporary work camps; oil and gas activities approved by OGC delegation.**
- 5) **Recreational - E.g. recreational trails, playing fields**
- 6) **Transportation/Utility Corridors - Eg.. Roads and utility pipelines**

**Background:**

- The ALC Act, ALR General Regulation and ALR Use Regulation outline the permitted uses within the ALR. A landowner may make an application to the ALC to conduct a use that is not permitted by the ALC Act and ALR Regulations.
- Non-farm use applications fall into two main categories:
  - Uses that exceed the permitted farm use and permitted non-farm use criteria in the ALR Use Regulation
  - Uses that are not contemplated at all in the ALC Act or ALR Use Regulation
- Non-farm use applications must be reviewed by local government and may not proceed to the ALC unless authorized by a resolution of the local government. A local government may elect to refuse to forward an application to the ALC.
- Applications made to the ALC may be decided by the Executive Committee (i.e. applications of provincial importance), a Panel (i.e. based on geography or application type), or CEO. The majority of applications are decided by Administrative Region Panels.
- The ALC may decide to refuse, approve, or approve an alternate proposal for each application.

**2021/2022 NON-FARM USE STATISTICS (APRIL 1, 2021 – FEBRUARY 9, 2022):**

| <b>Non-Farm Use Decisions by Administrative Region - April 1, 2021 – February 9, 2022</b> |                 |                |              |                   |
|---|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|
|   | <b>Approved</b> | <b>Refused</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>% Approved</b> |
| Interior  | 10              | 0              | 10           | 100%              |
| Island  | 4               | 1              | 5            | 80%               |
| Kootenay  | 16              | 0              | 16           | 100%              |
| North   | 14              | 1              | 15           | 93%               |
| Okanagan  | 15              | 2              | 17           | 88%               |
| South Coast   | 29              | 3              | 32           | 91%               |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>88</b>       | <b>7</b>       | <b>95</b>    | <b>93%</b>        |

Confidential Advice to Minister

| <b>Non-Farm Use Decisions by Type - April 1, 2021 - February 9, 2022</b> |                 |                |              |                   |
|--|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|
|  | <b>Approved</b> | <b>Refused</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>% Approved</b> |
| Agricultural/Farm  | 3               | 0              | 3            | 100%              |
| Civic/Institutional  | 17              | 3              | 20           | 85%               |
| Commercial/Retail  | 13              | 3              | 16           | 81%               |
| Industrial   | 7               | 0              | 7            | 100%              |
| Recreational   | 5               | 1              | 6            | 83%               |
| Transportation/Utilities   | 43              | 0              | 43           | 100%              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>88</b>       | <b>7</b>       | <b>95</b>    | <b>93%</b>        |

| <b>Approved by:</b> | <b>Prepared by:</b> | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Name: Kim Grout     | Name: Ron Wallace   | Name: Liz Sarioglu        |
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## **Agri-Tech Vertical Farming in the ALR**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **The ALR Use Regulation has been amended, effective August 31, 2022, to clarify that vertical farming of crops in controlled environment structures is a permitted farm use in the ALR should local governments wish to permit.**
- **Local governments will be able to prohibit the construction of controlled environment structures in the ALR, if they chose to do so.**
- **All farm structures, including controlled environment structures, in the ALR that require soil to be removed from, or fill to be placed on, an area greater than 1,000m<sup>2</sup> require approval from the Commission.**
- **Approval to remove soil or place fill in the ALR is done by Notice of Intent or Soil and Fill Use Application depending on the scale and impact of the proposal on the ALR.**
- **This fiscal, the ALC received one (1) Soil and Fill Use application and one (1) Notice of Intent to place fill for a controlled environment vertical farming structure in the ALR. Both were located in the lower mainland and both were approved.**
- **The ALC will consider the specific characteristics of a parcel when considering fill placement for a vertical farm structure including the size, siting, and arability of that land.**

**BACKGROUND:**

- Vertical farming of crops is a permitted farm use in the ALR.
- Up to 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of fill may be placed to construct a farm structure in the ALR. If more fill is required, the landowner is required to submit either a Notice of Intent or an application for placement of fill.
- Controlled environment structures that require more than a 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> area of fill for their construction, including structural fill and aggregate will require the approval of the ALC
- This year the ALC received 1 Soil and Fill Use application and 1 Notice of Intent to place fill for the construction of a controlled environment structure.

○ Advice/Recommendations

○

| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>Prepared by:</b> | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Name: Kim Grout          | Name: Liz Sarioglu  | Name: n/a                 |
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## ALR –Site C and EcoWaste

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

#### Site C

- Advice/Recommendations
- This exclusion was made at the request of BC Hydro for 91 hectares that includes “Area E” and Ice Bridge Road, to allow BC Hydro to extract gravel to continue construction on Site C’s earthfill dam.
- In accordance with the Mines Act and as set out in the Order in Council, BC Hydro will reclaim the Area E quarry before it is returned to the ALR on December 31,2025 and the reclamation plan will be developed in consultation and cooperation with Treaty 8 First Nations.

Advice/Recommendations

### BACKGROUND:

#### General

- B.C.’s ALR was established in 1973. Ontario and Quebec have similar farmland protection zones.
- The ALR is managed by an independent Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) with a clear mandate: to preserve agricultural land and encourage farming and ranching.
- Advice/Recommendations
- 

#### Site C

- Site C’s Environmental Assessment Certificate authorizes Area E as a contingency source of material for road construction on the south bank for construction of the earthfill dam.

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- The area is identified within the Peace River Regional District's North Peace Fringe Official Community Plan as "sand and gravel deposits suitable for gravel extraction," a permitted use under the regional district's zoning bylaw.
- In 2015, much, but not all of Site C's footprint was removed from the ALR by Orders in Council under the ELUA.
- These permanently excluded lands required for the dam site and reservoir, and temporarily excluded land required for construction purposes, including material sources for the dam site.
- Area E and Ice Bridge Road were not included in those 2015 Orders because Area E was only identified as a contingency source of granular material at that time.

## Advice/Recommendations

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In Ontario, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 sets out the procedures for excluding agricultural land from protections. It is issued by the Ontario provincial Cabinet and can be amended by the same.
- Planning authorities can exclude land from prime agricultural areas if the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas; alternative locations have been evaluated; there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid prime agricultural areas; and there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- N/A

| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>Prepared by:</b>   | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
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| Date approved: Feb 18/22 | Branch: CPPB          | Branch: CPPB              |
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## ALR – FOREIGN OWNERSHIP

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In Canada, owners of farmland are required to follow all relevant federal, provincial, local government, and First Nations government laws, regulations, and/or bylaws regardless of their country of residence.
- B.C. protects farmland for agricultural use through the *Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA)* and the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), rather than through controlling ownership.
- Through the *Property Transfer Tax Act*, the B.C. government has committed to taxing foreign speculators that push the price of housing in B.C. beyond the reach of many residents.
- Taxing foreign owners may help address housing affordability in B.C. by reducing foreign demand and curbing speculation in the residential property market.
- In 2019, government also placed size limits on principle residences in the ALR to stop the use of farmland for luxury mansion residences and reduce price increases attributable to them.
- In 2021, government provided a measure of flexibility for additional residences on the ALR while ensuring a proliferation of residences on farmland did not contribute to diminished farmland affordability.
- The Province is not advancing further legislation on foreign ownership of farmland at this time.

### BACKGROUND:

- Local governments are responsible for issuance of building permits and for regulating size and siting of principle residences (within the 500m<sup>2</sup> limit established in the ALCA in 2019).
- Local government bylaws may also permit a second residence provided the size of the parcel and existing residence meet conditions that came into force December 31, 2021, and are set out in Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation:

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- on a parcel that is 40 hectares or less, with an existing residence that has a total floor area of 500 m<sup>2</sup> or less, a second residence that is 90 m<sup>2</sup> or less in total floor area can be built;
- on a parcel that is over 40 hectares, a second residence that is 186 m<sup>2</sup> or less in total floor area can be built.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries created a bylaw standard in November 2011 guiding local governments in developing bylaws for siting and size of residential uses in the ALR. This helps ensure that most of the land is preserved for agricultural use and assists in reducing farm practice complaints.
- Changes to the *Property Transfer Tax Act* in 2016 authorize the collection of information from owners when they register their property. Concurrently, the Property Transfer Tax Return form was amended to require purchasers to identify “country of citizenship”, thereby specifically identifying foreign purchasers.
- In 2018, the B.C. government increased the additional property purchase tax rate (foreign buyers’ tax) to 20 percent, which had previously only applied to Metro Vancouver Regional District, but has now been extended to the Fraser Valley, Nanaimo, Central Okanagan, and the Capital Regional District.
- In B.C., there are no restrictions on who can purchase agricultural land.
- The foreign buyer’s tax is applied to agricultural land with the aim of helping address housing affordability in B.C. by reducing foreign demand. Specifically, the foreign buyers’ tax applies to property classified as farmland by BC Assessment because the property is used as a dwelling for the owner or a farmer.
- Ministry of Finance (FIN) Property Transfer Transactions (PTT) data collected from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021:
  - A total of 179,871 PTT occurred in B.C. during this time.
  - Of the total PTT in the province, 1 percent were foreign involved, where foreign involved means any foreign involvement, that may or may not also include some Canadian involvement in the same transaction.
  - The provincial average price of foreign-involved PTT was 51 percent greater than the Canadian-involved PTT, where Canadian involved means only Canadian involvement and no foreign involvement in the transaction.
  - Farm PTT made up 0.5 percent (912) of the total PTT for the period.
  - Of the 912 farm transfers, 28 (3 percent) were foreign-involved transactions.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Several provinces have enacted legislation to control foreign ownership of farmland. These include Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island (Appendix A provides additional information).

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**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- N/A

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**Appendix A****FEDERAL:**

- The *Investment Canada Act* is the primary mechanism governing the review of foreign investment in Canada. Foreign investments in a Canadian farm business, regardless of their value, are not subject to the review process, unless they could be injurious to national security.

**ONTARIO:**

- No restriction on foreign ownership.

**ALBERTA:**

- The *Agricultural and Recreational Land Ownership Act* monitors and controls acquisition of prime agricultural and recreational land by non-Canadians.
- Subject to certain exceptions for commercial ventures (including limited natural resource extraction or processing and residential development), the Act restricts ownership by non-Canadians to no more than two parcels totaling no more than 20 acres.

**SASKATCHEWAN:**

- The *Saskatchewan Farm Ownership Act* was passed in 1974. It has since become part of *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act*.
- Ineligible individuals/entities must apply to the Farm Land Security Board for an exemption to acquire an interest in more than 10 acres of farmland. Entities that are partially foreign owned but controlled by Saskatchewan residents or their farming corporations can own up to 320 acres.

**MANITOBA:**

- The *Farm Lands Ownership Act* limits foreign interest in farmland to 40 acres.
- Non-Canadian individuals and corporations may apply for an exemption to acquire more farmland.

**QUEBEC:**

- An *Act Respecting the Acquisition of Farm Land by Non-Residents* is in place.
- Non-residents and foreign-controlled entities must get permission to buy more than four hectares (or about 10 acres) of agricultural land.

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (PEI)**

- The *Lands Protection Act* prevents non-resident persons or corporations from owning, renting or leasing an aggregate of more than 5 acres of land.

## ALR/ALC REVITALIZATION OVERVIEW

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Our government is making it clear that farmland is for farming in B.C.
- Pressures on our farmland have continued to grow for many years – driving the cost of land out of reach for farmers and allowing valuable farmland to be damaged.
- In November 2018, government passed Bill 52 – Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2018, which:
  - Restricted the size of housing to address very large estate homes and speculation in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) so that farmers can afford to get onto the land and bring it into production.
  - Cracked down on dumping construction waste and fill in the ALR to protect our valuable, arable soil.
  - Re-instated one zone for all ALR land in B.C. to make it clear that the whole ALR benefits from the same strong protections.
- In May 2019 government passed Bill 15 – Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2019, which:
  - Focused on giving the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) the tools it needs to support farmers and ranchers in every part of B.C.
  - Strengthened the independence of the ALC so it can better fulfill its mandate of preserving the ALR while encouraging farming and ranching within British Columbia so that people in B.C. can count on fresh, local food on their tables for years to come.
  - Included changes to the exclusion application process, panel flexibility, enforcement provisions and requirements for notice of statutory right of ways.
- In December 2021, government amended the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation (ALRUR) so that:
  - ALR landowners have options for an additional residence, acknowledging their request for more residential flexibility on the ALR.
  - Depending on the size of the parcel and the size of the existing residence, these changes may allow an additional residence of 90m<sup>2</sup> or 186m<sup>2</sup>.

### BACKGROUND:

- 2017 – Key mandate letter commitment was to revitalize the ALR and ALC.
- January 2018 – As part of this mandate, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, appointed an independent Minister’s Advisory Committee (MAC) to lead stakeholder engagements on how to revitalize the ALR and the ALC.
- February 5 – April 30, 2018 – MAC undertook stakeholder engagements.

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- July 31, 2018 – MAC released an *Interim Committee Report to the Minister of Agriculture* on the revitalization of the ALR and the ALC which contained immediate recommendations for legislative change.
- November 27, 2018 – Bill 52 (the *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2018*) was passed. The three key changes included restricting the size of principal residences, reunifying the ALR into one zone, and restricting unauthorized fill placement in the ALR.
- February 22, 2019 – Bill 52 changes were brought into force. At the same time the former the Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation was renamed the Agricultural Land Reserve General Regulation and set out application procedures. A new ALRUR was adopted and included new provisions about residential, soil, and fill uses of ALR land.
- April 30, 2019 – MAC released the *Final Committee Report to the Minister of Agriculture: Recommendations for Revitalization* (MAC Report), detailing 32 recommendations to support agriculture in the province.
- May 30, 2019 – Bill 15 (the *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2019*) was passed and has since come into force. The legislation strengthened ALC governance and independence, and further protected ALR land. Appendix A provides examples of the changes.
- With Bill 52 changes, the ministry also heard that some ALR landowners felt that the changes were too restrictive and asked government to consider increasing additional residence options in the ALR.
- September 19 - November 15, 2019 – The ministry responded to the concern by holding a public engagement. Feedback was summarized in the Supporting B.C. Farmers "*What We Heard*" Report, where the need for more residential flexibility in the ALR was a key theme.
- January 27, 2020 – The *Policy Intentions Paper: Residential Flexibility in the ALR* outlining ways to increase residential flexibility in the ALR through additional residence options was released for public comment.
- June 26, 2020 – As a result of public engagement, further regulatory amendments were made as follows:
  - Reduce the fee for non-adhering residential use applications to \$900.
  - Redistribute all application fees to a 50:50 split between local governments and the ALC.
  - Increase the volume of annual fill that can be deposited on properties in the ALR for maintenance of an existing farm road.
  - Permit the use of recycled concrete and asphalt for certain fill uses.
- September 4, 2020 – Feedback on the *Policy Intentions Paper: Residential Flexibility in the ALR* was published in a "*What we Heard*" Report. The feedback was used to inform the new rules that increase residential flexibility through additional residence options.
- July 12, 2021 – New rules under the ALRUR came into effect December 31, 2021, allowing for increased residential flexibility through additional residence options

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(provided the changes are permitted in local or First Nations government bylaws). The new rules permit ALR landowners to have two residences per parcel in specific circumstances as follows:

- If the parcel is 40 hectares or less, there will be permission for two residences: one that is 500 m<sup>2</sup> or less in total floor area, and one that is 90 m<sup>2</sup> or less in total floor area.
- If the parcel is larger than 40 hectares, there will be permission for two residences: one that is of any size permitted by the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* at the time it was built, and one that is up to 186 m<sup>2</sup> in total floor area.

**Status of Recommendations**

- 2018 to present – the overall status of the 32 recommendations outlined in the MAC Report are outlined in the following.
  - To date, 30 of the 32 recommendations are considered to have been completed. The 30 recommendations that are completed include those that were fully implemented, partially implemented as well as those that the ministry decided not to pursue for implementation.
  - Recommendation 14 and 25 have not been completed. Recommendation 14 (relates to cumulative footprint) and preliminary work on this is underway. Recommendation 25 (relates to oil and gas development in the ALR in the NE) a multi-agency working group will be completing a report as to the history and current context in NEBC with respect to oil and gas and agricultural land use; and an examination of the existing policy and regulatory frameworks. Work is nearing completion on this recommendation.
  - The ministry has not publicly committed to implementing all the recommendations from the MAC report.
  - Additional information is provided in Appendix B.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C.'s ALR was established in 1973. Ontario and Quebec have similar farmland protection zones.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Unknown

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**Appendix A**

- Bill 15: *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2019* changes include the following:
  1. Requiring that exclusion applications be submitted to the ALC only by local governments, First Nations governments, the Province, or prescribed bodies to encourage these types of applications be done as part of thoughtful land-use planning process.
  2. Providing the chair of the ALC with more flexibility to organize commission members into a decision-making panel on applications when warranted, by topic, technical expertise or by an administrative region.
  3. Adding more compliance and enforcement capacity and tools, including a new offence for landowners who do not produce records to the ALC when ordered.
  4. Requiring a person who applies to register a statutory right of way under the *Land Title Act* to notify the commission.
  5. Replacing the former ALC governance model of six panel regions and an executive committee with one commission maintaining regional representation by requiring membership from all six administrative regions.
  6. Adding new decision-making criteria to prioritize the protection and enhancement of the size, integrity, and continuity of the land base that the ALC must consider when exercising any power or performing a duty under the ALCA.
  7. Enabling the ALC's CEO to register remediation order notes on title.

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**Appendix B****Status of the 32 recommendations outlined in the MAC Report (detailed information in table attached)**

- Of the 32 recommendations outlined in the MAC report, 30 are considered completed. The following provides a breakdown of recommendations.
  - Recommendations that were fully implemented include recommendations 2, 3, 7, 10<sup>1</sup>, 12, and 18.
  - Recommendations that were partially implemented, not implemented, or considered an ongoing process include recommendations 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32.
  - Advice/Recommendations

○

○

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**Communication related to MAC Report recommendations**

- A ministry news release from August 8, 2018, indicated that MAC had prepared an interim revitalization report for the Minister. The new release noted that at the time 17 recommendation had been put forward and 14 issues were under consideration for the

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 10 relates to maintaining a province-wide Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI). The ministry has received an annual funding lift in the budget to carryout this work.

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final report. In the news release, the ministry noted that it would review the recommendations and analyze the impacts, however a commitment to implement was not made.

## Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUIs)

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI) collect consistent, credible, and comprehensive data about land use and land cover on agricultural lands across the province.
- Since 2007, ALUIs have been measuring farmland utilization and non-agricultural uses in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and changes in land use patterns and practices over time.
- Without ALUI, the question of how ALR land is being used would be largely unknown.
- ALUIs are a key tool for developing agriculturally supportive provincial and local government bylaws and policies, which contribute to the growth of the sector.
- ALUIs generate a wealth of information at the provincial, regional, and local level. The data informs:
  - Provincial initiatives such as ALR revitalization;
  - local government land use decisions, including Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws;
  - emergency response for environmental disasters and animal health events, such as wildfire or Avian Influenza. ALUI data can be overlaid with evacuation areas to give localized estimations of impact;
  - research topics such as wildlife habitat, species at risk and water quality;
  - our understanding of climate change impacts, associated risks and adaptation opportunities; and
  - several climate related predictive models, including the Agricultural Water Demand Model.
- In 2021/22, ALUIs informed numerous projects, strategies, and responses including:
  - opportunities and land use challenges for the agritech sector;
  - new provincial regulations to increase housing flexibility in the ALR and strategies for monitoring effectiveness;
  - tree fruit stabilization initiative;
  - Nooksack River Transboundary Technical Collaboration Group annual report;
  - Noble Creek Irrigation System task force;
  - agricultural economic impact assessment from 2021 Provincial Drought Response; and
  - situational awareness and impact estimates for 2021 flood response in Sumas Prairie.

### BACKGROUND:

- ALUI projects are conducted in different areas of the province each year.
- Data collection leverages remote sensing technologies (satellites), aerial and street view imagery and windshield observations from public roadways.

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- ALUI projects utilize a unique mix of partnerships and resources, including local governments, nonprofit organizations, community interest groups, Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), and AFF base funding.
- ALUIs capture a snapshot in time; ‘baseline’ ALUIs are an initial snapshot while ‘update’ ALUIs are subsequent snapshots to measure change.
- Baseline ALUIs are complete for 76 percent of the ALR and underway for 16 percent of the ALR (Cariboo, Kitimat Stikine, Central Coast, and Northern Rockies). Completion of these regions was delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- An update was completed for Abbotsford in 2020, and Chilliwack in 2021. A Metro Vancouver update will begin in 2022.
- Updates have only been completed on 15 percent of the ALR and staff are developing strategies to increase the rate of updates while completing baseline ALUIs for the province.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- ALUIs are unique to B.C.
- Agriculture and Agrifood Canada uses ALUIs for their National Crop Inventory to more accurately describe B.C.’s unique small lot agriculture in a national context.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- AFF has approximately 3.5 FTEs contributing to ALUIs.
- Approximately \$295,000 was allocated for ALUIs in 2021/22.

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## **Animal Health Centre Closure and Business Continuity Plans**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The atmospheric river event on November 15, 2021, led to widespread flooding in the Sumas Prairie area, including the Animal Health Centre (AHC) laboratory and office building.
- Mechanical systems that support lab and office operations were damaged by flooding including the acid neutralizer system, which treats effluent water before joining to the municipal system, and the incinerator used for the safe disposal of hazardous animal waste.
- Laboratory services to BC clients were interrupted for up to 48 hours until alternative services could be arranged.
- All necropsy diagnostic testing is currently suspended, and clients have been directed to send samples to other provincial and CFIA laboratories in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island.
- Alternate arrangements are in place with the CFIA reference laboratories for continued testing and monitoring of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE “mad cow disease”) and foreign animal diseases such as avian influenza (AI) and African swine fever (ASF).
- Arrangements are in place with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) for ongoing monitoring of COVID in mink.
- For AI, samples continue to be collected from live and dead migratory waterfowl, as well as sediment samples from the wetlands they gather on, and testing continues at CFIA and BCCDC facilities.
- Office occupancy commenced March 14, 2022, portions of the AHC laboratory remains closed as repair work continues.
- Serology lab services have reopened, and the plant lab functions began operating at 50% capacity on March 23.
- We anticipate some testing services such as bacteriology, molecular diagnostics, parasitology, histology and full services of the plant laboratory to come back on line as repairs are made in the facility.
- The Province is continuing to assess options to bring services back to BC as quickly as possible while concurrently considering models to “build back better”.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Prior to the November flood, the AHC was the only accredited full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory in B.C. providing world class veterinary laboratory diagnostic services to safeguard the health of all animals in BC, protect the agricultural

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economy and shield the public against zoonoses (diseases transmissible from animals to humans).

- The AHC was offering more than 400 fee-for-service laboratory diagnostic tests for agents that may be found in wild and domestic birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians.
- The AHC also supports the *Animal Health Act* and Chief Veterinarian in managing disease outbreaks and animal welfare issues.
- The range of diagnostic testing included bacteriology, histopathology, molecular diagnostics, necropsy, serology and virology
- The AHC receives about 8000 diagnostic case submissions and serves about 700 clients every year that includes veterinarians, animal/farm owners, universities, and government agencies to support disease control and prevention, farm profitability, business sustainability, animal welfare, food safety and public health.
- The AHC also receives about 3000 samples for BSE testing as part of the national BSE surveillance program.
- The turnaround time for testing at the AHC varies from 8-10 hours for a suspected foreign animal disease or a high consequence disease PCR test to about a week for a complete necropsy for a large animal that would include testing of multiple samples in all laboratory sections, necropsy and histopathology evaluation by a veterinary pathologist.
- Alternate arrangements for diagnostic testing at other labs are taking up to a week or more in due to additional time required for shipping and transportation (Appendix 1: Impact of Flood to AHC Functions).
- Closure of the AHC could reduce B.C.'s ability for early detection and containment of animal disease outbreaks such as AI.
- Early detection is crucial for effective and rapid containment of diseases to protect animal and human health and minimize negative economic impact.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Veterinary diagnostic laboratories in other provinces (both provincial and CFIA laboratories) have been supporting BC clients since the closure of the AHC.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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| Date approved: Mar 28/22 | Branch: Plant & Animal Health | Branch: Plant & Animal Health |

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**Appendix 1: Impact of Flood to AHC Functions**

| AHC Function  | Recover Time Objectives (RTO) | Impacts          |           |                  |                 |                   | Impact Description   | Function Priority |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|
|   |                               | Legal/Regulatory | Financial | Service Delivery | Health & Safety | Image/Credibility |  |                   |
| Diagnose and monitor animal diseases & report results | <8 hours                      |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death. Unable to support disease control, animal movements, export, trade  | Mission Critical  |
| <b>AHC Sub-Functions</b>                              |                               |                  |           |                  |                 |                   |  |                   |
| Necropsy  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Bacteriology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Histopathology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Virology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Serology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease and perform disease surveillance   | Business Priority |
| Molecular Diagnostics                                 | <8 hours                      | Y                |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death - mission critical for Foreign Animal Disease and pandemic testing. This is also a regulatory requirement as | Mission Critical  |

ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
 Confidential Advice to Minister

|                |           |   |  |   |  |   |   |                  |
|----------------|-----------|---|--|---|--|---|---|------------------|
|                |           |   |  |   |  |   | set out in the Emergency Management Program Regulation.   |                  |
| Administration | <24 hours | Y |  | Y |  | Y | Unable to support CVO and Directors of the PAHB. Unable to provide information from diagnostic evaluations to CVO on provincially reportable diseases and alert the CFIA of suspect foreign animal disease. Unable to provide logistical support for submission of samples, data capture and reporting - interface with external and internal clients | Mission Critical |

## **Animal Health Centre Closure and Business Continuity Plans**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The atmospheric river event on November 15, 2021, led to widespread flooding in the Sumas Prairie area, including the Animal Health Centre (AHC) laboratory and office building.
- Mechanical systems that support lab and office operations were damaged by flooding including the acid neutralizer system, which treats effluent water before joining to the municipal system, and the incinerator used for the safe disposal of hazardous animal waste.
- Laboratory services to BC clients were interrupted for up to 48 hours until alternative services could be arranged.
- All diagnostic testing is currently suspended, and clients have been directed to send samples to other provincial and CFIA laboratories in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island.
- Alternate arrangements are in place with the CFIA reference laboratories for continued testing and monitoring of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE “mad cow disease”) and foreign animal diseases such as avian influenza (AI) and African swine fever (ASF).
- Arrangements are in place with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) for ongoing monitoring of COVID in mink.
- For AI, samples continue to be collected from live and dead migratory waterfowl, as well as sediment samples from the wetlands they gather on, and testing continues at CFIA and BCCDC facilities.
- Although office occupancy is allowed starting March 14, 2022, the AHC laboratory remains closed as repair work continues.
- Preparations are underway in order to resume some of the laboratory services such as serology in the next few weeks.
- The Province is assessing options to bring services back to BC as quickly as possible while concurrently considering models to “build back better”.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Prior to the November flood, the AHC was the only accredited full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory in B.C. providing world class veterinary laboratory diagnostic services to safeguard the health of all animals in BC, protect the agricultural economy and shield the public against zoonoses (diseases transmissible from animals to humans).

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- The AHC was offering more than 400 fee-for-service laboratory diagnostic tests for agents that may be found in wild and domestic birds, mammals, fish, reptiles and amphibians.
- The AHC also supports the *Animal Health Act* and Chief Veterinarian in managing disease outbreaks and animal welfare issues.
- The range of diagnostic testing included bacteriology, histopathology, molecular diagnostics, necropsy, serology and virology
- The AHC receives about 8000 diagnostic case submissions and serves about 700 clients every year that includes veterinarians, animal/farm owners, universities and government agencies to support disease control and prevention, farm profitability, business sustainability, animal welfare, food safety and public health.
- The AHC also receives about 3000 samples for BSE testing as part of the national BSE surveillance program.
- The turnaround time for testing at the AHC varies from 8-10 hours for a suspected foreign animal disease or a high consequence disease PCR test to about a week for a complete necropsy for a large animal that would include testing of multiple samples in all laboratory sections, necropsy and histopathology evaluation by a veterinary pathologist.
- Alternate arrangements for diagnostic testing at other labs are taking up to a week or more in due to additional time required for shipping and transportation (Appendix 1: Impact of Flood to AHC Functions).
- Closure of the AHC could reduce B.C.'s ability for early detection and containment of animal disease outbreaks such as AI.
- Early detection is crucial for effective and rapid containment of diseases to protect animal and human health and minimize negative economic impact.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Veterinary diagnostic laboratories in other provinces (both provincial and CFIA laboratories) have been supporting BC clients since the closure of the AHC.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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**Appendix 1: Impact of Flood to AHC Functions**

| AHC Function  | Recover Time Objectives (RTO) | Impacts          |           |                  |                 |                   | Impact Description   | Function Priority |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|
|   |                               | Legal/Regulatory | Financial | Service Delivery | Health & Safety | Image/Credibility |  |                   |
| Diagnose and monitor animal diseases & report results | <8 hours                      |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death. Unable to support disease control, animal movements, export, trade  | Mission Critical  |
| <b>AHC Sub-Functions</b>                              |                               |                  |           |                  |                 |                   |  |                   |
| Necropsy  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Bacteriology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Histopathology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Virology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death  | Business Priority |
| Serology  | 7 days                        |                  |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease and perform disease surveillance   | Business Priority |
| Molecular Diagnostics                                 | <8 hours                      | Y                |           | Y                |                 | Y                 | Unable to determine cause of animal disease/death - mission critical for Foreign Animal Disease and pandemic testing. This is also a regulatory requirement as | Mission Critical  |

ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
 Confidential Advice to Minister

|                |           |   |  |   |  |   |   |                  |
|----------------|-----------|---|--|---|--|---|---|------------------|
|                |           |   |  |   |  |   | set out in the Emergency Management Program Regulation.   |                  |
| Administration | <24 hours | Y |  | Y |  | Y | Unable to support CVO and Directors of the PAHB. Unable to provide information from diagnostic evaluations to CVO on provincially reportable diseases and alert the CFIA of suspect foreign animal disease. Unable to provide logistical support for submission of samples, data capture and reporting - interface with external and internal clients | Mission Critical |

## AFRICAN SWINE FEVER

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious and often deadly viral disease of both domestic and feral pigs of all ages.
- ASF does not infect humans and is not a food safety concern.
- ASF has not been diagnosed in Canada or the US. It is currently spreading in many countries in the European Union and Asia and was recently diagnosed in the Dominican Republic (July 2021) and Haiti (September 2021).
- B.C. has been suggested as a high-risk for entry of ASF to Canada because of the large amount of travel between Asia and B.C.
- Detection of ASF in Canada would have major trade implications and necessitate widespread culls on infected farms as well as welfare culls of healthy pigs to address overcrowding and feed shortages due to market disruptions
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) is working with the Federal Government and B.C.'s pork producers to proactively reduce the risk of ASF entering both commercial and small-scale farms.
- Prior to the November 2021 flooding of the B.C. Animal Health Centre (AHC) in Abbotsford, all pigs submitted to the AHC were tested for ASF.
- Since the closure of the AHC, arrangements have been made with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Abbotsford District Office to forward any suspect ASF samples directly to the CFIA's National Centre for Foreign Animal Diseases (NCFAD) in Winnipeg for testing.
- Restoring the AHC to full function is a priority for the Ministry.
- A B.C.-specific working group (Ministry, CFIA, and industry) is developing a plan for destruction and disposal of infected and non-infected pigs in the event of ASF detection. Ministry staff also participate in the Western Area Disposal and Destruction Working Group with the four Western provinces.
- The Ministry has invested in and worked with industry to develop biosecurity infrastructure and training on farms and at abattoirs, so they are prepared to respond to contagious diseases.
- The B.C. Government has funded the development of on-line resource materials for small-scale pork producers. A series of workshops is also planned.
- The B.C. Government funded the B.C. pork industry in 2021 to consult with the Ministry, producers, industry stakeholders, Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, and CFIA to develop the B.C. Pork Market Interruption Response Plan.

- Government agencies have vetted and approved all 20 of the Plan's recommendations which are at various stages of implementation.
- The Canadian pork industry has invested heavily in traceability and actively promotes Premises ID to better protect the health and safety of their animals.

**BACKGROUND:**

- ASF is one of the most important viral pig diseases. It causes variable patterns of disease with several forms. The most common form is an acute hemorrhagic disease with up to 100% mortality.
- Due to the high number of pigs moving between the four Western provinces, they have agreed to coordinate response to a diagnosis of ASF in any one province. A steering committee and four working groups have completed significant work to prepare for such an event.
- Most of Canada's pig products are exported. A diagnosis of ASF would result in border closures preventing export leading to necessary welfare culling of healthy animals to address over-crowding and shortage of feed.
- There is no vaccine and there are no treatments for ASF.
- Prevention is completely reliant on biosecurity.
- The incubation period is five days to two weeks which could allow the disease to spread to many locations before being detected. Due to the variable signs at presentation (acute, subacute, and chronic forms), the time from first infection until detection and confirmation has been estimated to be as long as 26 days in simulation exercises.
- Protection steps in place in Canada:
  - Canada does not import live pigs, pork products, or pork by-products from China.
  - CFIA has reviewed and is confident in the EU's zoning system for ASF. The EU zoning map is being used to avoid importing from high-risk zones.
  - International waste controls are in place to prevent feeding of garbage from foreign countries to livestock.
  - Canadian Border Patrol agents conduct advanced screening of luggage from ASF positive countries with increased numbers of specially trained sniffer dogs.
- Preparedness steps in place in Canada
  - USA and Canada Chief Veterinarians tasked staff at the North American Animal Health Committee meeting in August 2018 to work together to harmonize prevention, diagnostic and response measures. Many provincial and federal working groups are in place.
  - A molecular test (PCR) from the National CFIA lab has been deployed to provincial labs, including the AHC in Abbotsford.
  - The AHC will be able to resume PCR testing for ASF within 2-3 weeks of the lab becoming operational again.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Canada is working in close partnership with the United States and Mexico to keep ASF out of North America.
- B.C. is working closely with the Western provinces on preparation and prevention plans.
- Wild boar in infected countries have proven to be a significant obstacle to eradication and controlling spread.
- Although B.C. has no wild boar, escaped domestic “feral” pigs have been sighted and present a risk to the identification, control, and eradication of ASF, if it was detected in feral pigs.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The AHC was using the CFIA accredited test for ASF and was taking the precaution of testing every pig with symptoms potentially compatible with ASF at no charge. In 2021, 22 cases were tested for ASF by the AHC. The recovery of the diagnostic capacity of the AHC is a high priority.
- Ministry staff have attended many national and provincial meetings addressing the prevention and preparation planning for this disease, as well as participating on several western regional or national level working groups.

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## AVIAN INFLUENZA

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- AI is a federally regulated disease, and as such, the CFIA leads the response with a range of provincial staff providing surveillance testing, planning, operational, and recovery support.
- BC and the federal government (CFIA) are well connected and coordinated on avian influenza surveillance, testing and response.
- To date, six provinces and 18 US States have detected AI in the last four months.
- Ministry staff are in close contact with the industry and CFIA about new information regarding Avian Influenza.
  - AFF, CFIA and BC Poultry industry met March 30th to discuss the current AI situation and our preparedness levels here in BC.
  - CFIA advised that the Nova Scotia outbreaks are winding down (surveillance phase), and responses are underway (euthanizing) at two turkey producers in Ontario.
  - CFIA believes there is a heightened likelihood of an AI outbreak in Saskatchewan and, or Manitoba based on AI surveillance and outbreak in North Dakota.
    - CFIA are planning to operate a joint Incident Command Post for both provinces in the event of an outbreak in both provinces.
- BC is closely monitoring the AI situation occurring on the East Coast and in Ontario, and ensuring our poultry sector is applying heightened biosecurity measures to protect the BC poultry sector.
  - BC is also holding regular meetings with the US to share information regarding wild bird surveillance throughout the pacific flyway.
- The Ministry's Animal Health Centre (AHC), a key component of the Province's AI surveillance and support program, is currently closed due to flooding of the Sumas Prairie in late 2021, however testing for AI has continued.
  - We have interim testing arrangements with the CFIA lab in Winnipeg for testing AI suspected samples.
  - We are continuing to make repairs to the lab so that we can resume services to support the BC AI surveillance and testing work.
  - We anticipate that the AFF lab will be in a position to process suspect AI samples in the coming months – the delay is primarily due to supply chain challenges for parts.
  - Sampling of live and dead migratory waterfowl, as well as sediment samples from the wetlands the birds gather on, is continuing with testing by CFIA and BC Centre for Disease Control facilities.

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- Should a suspect AI sample be identified, out of an abundance of caution - BC Poultry is considering the potential for instituting a voluntary industry shutdown as a measure to contain AI and limit impacts to the poultry sector.
- To ensure our preparedness, AFF is reviewing and confirming the current list of designated provincial responders for key AI response positions
  - AFF currently has a minimum of 2 staff identified for each of the positions.
  - Additional AFF staff may be activated as needed to support any of the response functions and additional provincial support may be requested from Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health, and Emergency Management BC (who are all signatories to the BC – Canada Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Support Plan) or BC Wildfire Service staff as required.
- In Summary, this is a serious issue that we are monitoring closely in partnership with industry and CFIA. We are taking steps to mitigate risk to the BC poultry sector and preparing in the event Avian Influenza reaches BC poultry operations.

**BACKGROUND:**

- AI is a viral disease that can cause significant morbidity and mortality in domestic poultry.
- In 2004, BC experienced an outbreak of AI that resulted in depopulation of 62 million birds on 53 premises. In 2014, an outbreak of AI resulted in depopulation of 240,000 birds on 13 premises.
- Wild migratory waterfowl can carry AI and spread the virus among jurisdictions during their annual migrations. Waterfowl from North America and Asia mix in the high arctic during the summer, which facilitates transmission of AI between the two continents.
- BC's poultry production is largely concentrated in the Fraser Valley, which is located on pathways for wild waterfowl migration and is a popular overwintering ground.
- The World Organization for Animal Health has issued a special warning that jurisdictions in key migratory flyways (like BC) must be extremely vigilant and implement heightened wild bird surveillance for AI.
- The response to a detection of AI is defined by the BC Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Support (FADES) plan. The 2019 FADES plan update was led by CFIA with cosigners Public Safety Canada, the Ministry, BC Ministry of Justice, BC Ministry of Health and BC Ministry of Environment.
- In December 2021 AI was confirmed in Newfoundland (two farms) and Nova Scotia (three farms). BC is preparing for a potential outbreak whether it comes from the east or from migratory birds.
- For the Fall/Winter 2021/2022 wild bird AI surveillance season, a total of 3286 samples have been collected/tested from across Canada, with 12 positive AI samples found to date (11 in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and 1 in BC).
- An official notification was sent to members of the BC Poultry Industry. They will alter their biosecurity measures as per established protocols based on the notification.
- In BC, 1211 samples have been collected and 656 of those samples have been tested

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through the Ministry's AI surveillance program. Remaining samples await testing at the National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

- On February 3, 2022, AI was detected in a Bald Eagle in the Lower Mainland. This virus is related to but distinct from the virus circulating in Eastern Canada.
- Samples continue to be collected from live and dead migratory waterfowl, as well as sediment samples from the wetlands they gather on, and testing continues at CFIA and BC Centre for Disease Control facilities.
- The AI risk in fall 2022 will likely be greater than fall 2021 because of the combined probabilities of a new incursion of AI from Eurasia as well as the current Eastern Canada AI spreading within North America during the waterfowl breeding season.
- Moreover, the risk of AI is predicted to increase into the future, as climate change causes alterations in waterfowl ecology and associated virus transmission patterns.
- In the 2014 response, the work of the Ministry's AHC was crucial: diagnosing samples and providing science-based guidance and advice to those leading the response, and the public.
- The AHC remains closed due to the damages caused by flooding in late 2021 but staff are expected to be back in the building once it can serve as a safe and functional workspace again.
- Testing of both animal and plant samples was redirected to other provincial labs immediately after the flooding, and testing services for B.C. producers and residents will continue to be available through alternative arrangements until the AHC is operational.
- Information regarding alternative services is available on the Ministry's website.
- Though test results are taking longer to confirm, the wild bird surveillance program for AI in B.C. is continuing this year.
- On March 27, Ontario confirmed the presence of AI (H5N1) in two poultry flocks in southern Ontario. 10K management zones have been established around the operations for the purpose of containing the transmission of the disease.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Currently, Europe, Africa, and Asia are experiencing a significant, ongoing AI pandemic with 643 outbreaks reported in the first two months of 2021 alone.
- In 2014/2015 there were multiple AI outbreaks in Canada and the USA costing over \$3 billion.

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## INFECTIOUS LARYNGOTRACHEITIS (ILT)

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Avian infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) is an economically important respiratory viral disease affecting chickens. It does not affect turkeys.
- There is no known risk of human infection with ILT virus. It is not a food safety risk.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of outbreaks of ILT in the Fraser Valley in the last two years.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) Animal Health Centre (AHC) diagnosed 45 ILT positive cases in 2020 and 67 in 2021.
- ILT is a provincially reportable disease under the B.C. *Animal Health Act* and all cases, suspected and confirmed, are reported to the Chief Veterinarian (CV).
- The AHC is well equipped to detect ILT in avian species and able to provide a confirmed diagnosis of ILT within 24 hours.
- With the current closure of the AHC, private veterinarians are reporting suspect ILT cases directly to the CV and acting upon the presumption of positive.
- Restoring the AHC to full function is a priority so that the Ministry can resume support for B.C. poultry producers by providing timely diagnosis of ILT, disease notifications, and mitigation strategies.

### BACKGROUND:

- ILT is highly contagious. Poor biosecurity, transport of infected birds, and spread of contaminated litter leads to the spread of the virus.
- Control of ILT continues to be a challenge for poultry producers in the Fraser Valley.
- Long lived production birds such as layers and broiler breeders are routinely vaccinated for ILT under the direction of their poultry veterinarian.
- Due to their shorter lifespan and the cost of vaccinating, broilers are not vaccinated for ILT and remain susceptible to the clinical effects of infection (mortality, processing downgrades).
- Unvaccinated flocks represent the majority of ILT cases submitted to the AHC. Implementing strict biosecurity measures offers some protection for these flocks.
- Efforts by the Ministry in 2007 identified hot manure spreading, barn cleanouts during windy conditions, proximity to farms using live chicken embryo origin (CEO) vaccines, biosecurity breaches by catching crews and flock thinning as risk factors.
- A significant characteristic of ILT (like all herpes viruses) is latency; vaccinated or recovered birds may not show clinical illness but remain infected and able to shed virus during times of stress.
- There is a variety of excellent licensed commercial vaccines available in Canada.

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- Clinical ILT occurs in poorly vaccinated flocks (layers, broiler breeders) and unvaccinated flocks (broilers).
- Clinical signs are related to viral infection of the lining of the trachea; respiratory distress, open mouth breathing, coughing up blood, and death.
- ILT causes reduced productivity in affected birds.
- Mortality rates may reach up to 20%.
- There is no public health impact of ILT, and positive broiler flocks may be shipped early as normal processing removes the affected tissues.
- ILT has occurred occasionally in unregulated small flocks.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- BC, ON and QC practice routine vaccination of commercial poultry for ILT and outbreak detections are provincially reportable. BC and ON issue disease notifications to their poultry industry to allow active mitigation.
- Other Western provinces (AB, SK, MB) do not support preventative vaccination and recommend depopulation of affected flocks, with limited compensation. This approach works due to the low density of poultry production and the low frequency of outbreaks.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The economic cost of ILT has not been determined but should be considered a preventable loss.
- The ILT diagnostic capability of the AHC, including the issuance of disease notifications to industry and assistance with developing disease control strategies is critical.
- Restoring the AHC to full function is a priority for the Ministry.
- An objective epidemiologic investigation of the current outbreaks is needed to identify additional risk factors and develop effective mitigation strategies.
- BC produced 121 million birds (193 million kilograms) of poultry in 2020, a reduction of 1.9% in birds (0.4% in weight) compared to 2019. The poultry sector (including chickens, turkeys, eggs for hatching and hatcheries) generated a revenue of \$478 million in farm cash receipts in 2020 (an increase of 0.4% compared to 2019).

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## Mink and COVID-19

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) was detected on two mink farms in December 2020, and one farm in May 2021. The Chief Veterinarian placed Quarantine Orders under the *Animal Health Act* on all infected premises to contain spread of the virus.
- While all three farms remain under quarantine, the quarantine of two of the farms infected in December 2020 has been limited to the frozen skins harvested at the time of infection.
- Mortality surveillance continues for all mink farms with live animals as required by the public health orders instituted by Fraser Health Authority (FHA).
- Due to the flood related closure of the Animal Health Centre, mink SARS-CoV-2 testing is being conducted at the B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC).
- As a result of the threat of SARS-CoV-2 mink variants, and the potential for these variants to have an impact on vaccine efficacy, the government instituted a ban on mink farming to protect public health.
- The decision to ban mink farming was informed by advice provided by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Dr. Bonnie Henry. The ministry consulted with the PHO and other public health agencies, such as FHA, on multiple occasions to understand the threat SARS-CoV-2 and mink farming posed to public health. Health officials ultimately advised that the threat could not be mitigated by the biosecurity measures that were in place, which is why a ban was instituted.
- The ban on mink farming is being pursued to protect public health. The purpose of the *Animal Health Act* is the protection of human and animal health, making this legislation the correct tool to use to enact the ban.
- The ban is being implemented by phasing out the industry over the course of three years. This timeframe provides farmers with significant time to safely decommission their farms and transition to another business.
  - The threat of SARS-CoV-2 is increased with increased numbers of animals. As breeding is banned, the PHO and the ministry feel that the virus can be effectively mitigated with the smaller number of animals.
  - By not requiring all animals to be culled immediately, the ministry is providing the farmers with more flexibility in how they would like to decommission their farm.
- As part of the ban, no compensation has been provided to mink farmers as there is a transition period over the next three years. The ministry continues to want to work with producers to find the appropriate supports within existing government programs and to aid transition to other agricultural industries.
  - The farmers are eligible for AgriStability and AgriRecovery payments. The farmers are also eligible for new entrant and business planning programs to aid

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in their transition to other industries. The ministry has made staff available to support the farmers in their transition.

- There are a multitude of programs available to support employees to transition to other employment through WorkBC. There is also a significant amount of employment opportunities available in the agricultural sector, and the ministry has been in contact with producers and agricultural organizations to facilitate potential employment opportunities for mink farmers to provide to their employees.
- The ministry does not subsidize fur farming. Farmers are eligible for AgriStability and we are working with Canada to develop an AgriRecovery initiative to provide additional assistance for the extraordinary costs of ending production.

**BACKGROUND:****Chronology**

- On March 17, 2020, Dr. Bonnie Henry declared a public health emergency. On March 18, 2020, the province declared a state of emergency to support the response to COVID-19.
- In June 2020, SARS-CoV-2 was detected in a mink herd in Denmark.
- B.C. officials from multiple provincial ministries began working together to prepare for the possibility of a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak at one of B.C.'s licensed mink farms.
- Despite enhanced biosecurity, two of the 12 licensed mink farms had SARS-CoV-2 infections in December 2020 after farm workers tested positive for the virus.
  - December 4, 2020, the Chief Veterinarian issued a Quarantine order on the first mink farm due to a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak.
  - December 21, 2020, the Chief Veterinarian issued a Quarantine order on a second mink farm due to a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak.
- May 11, 2021, the Chief Veterinarian issued a Quarantine order on a third mink farm due to a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak.
- A June 30, 2021, BCCDC Public Health Risk Assessment of Farmed Mink identified the likelihood of a mink-mutated virus variant emerging and spreading to the community as low.
- September 13, 2021, FHA advised that due to the location of the Fraser Valley mink farms in urban areas, an outbreak stemming from any of the farms would be difficult to control and contact tracing would not be possible.
- On July 26, 2021, Dr. Henry issued an order under the *Public Health Act* prohibiting the opening of new mink farms and requiring a cap on the number of animals on existing farms.
- In October 2021, Dr. Henry advised the ministry that the risk posed by mink farms had increased due to the ongoing outbreak on one farm, despite worker vaccinations and biosecurity measures, and the spread of the highly transmissible Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 in the community.

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- Dr. Henry advised that the health protection measures previously instituted on mink farms were not sufficient to mitigate the risks posed to public health.
- On November 26, 2021, the government passed a phased ban on mink farming.
- On January 31, 2022, Dr. Henry's July 26, 2021, order expired. The requirements of this order were codified in the amendments to the Fur Farm Regulation.

**Phase out details**

- Effective November 26, 2021:
  - Prohibition on the issuing of licenses for new mink farms.
  - Ban on breeding mink or importing new mink on to a farm.
  - Numbers of mink capped at the amount reported as being kept under the July 26, 2021 order by the PHO entitled "MINK FARMS — July 26, 2021"
  - All individuals engaged in mink related work must be vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 1, 2022.
  - The vaccination status of all individuals engaged in mink related work must be reported to the Chief Veterinarian by April 30, 2022.
- Effective April 1, 2022:
  - Only remaining breeding stock and pelts may remain for this calendar year.
  - In order to renew their licenses, farmers must submit an application including a statement of the number of mink intended to be kept on the fur farm, divided according to sex, and any other information the Chief Veterinarian requires.
  - Licenses to be changed to mink pelt licenses as of April 1, 2023 if pelts remain on farm.
- Effective April 1, 2023:
  - Ban on the keeping of live mink.
  - Mink farming licenses are no longer available. Farmers are only eligible for a mink pelt license.
  - Mink pelt licenses to be renewed by March 31, 2024.
- Effective April 1, 2025:
  - Mink pelt licenses are no longer available.
  - All aspects of mink farming are prohibited.

**Vaccination**

- The mink SARS-CoV-2 vaccine is currently an experimental vaccine that is restricted for emergency use under licensed veterinarian supervision. The vaccine has not been approved for general use in Canada as of February 1, 2022.
- Mink pups are unable to be vaccinated until they are 8 weeks old. Therefore, there is a period of time in which there are increased numbers of mink on farms that cannot be vaccinated, increasing the threat to public health.
- The Chief Veterinarian advised that even with vaccination, virus mitigation measures would need to continue.

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**Consultation with producers**

## Methods of Communication

- Formal Communications (3)
  - November 15, 2021, industry was advised decision-making was ongoing.
  - November 18, 2021, AFF's consultant reached out to producers to begin discussing transition options.
  - November 29, 2021, producers advised that the ban on mink farming was passed.
- Informal Communications (multiple)
  - AFF's consultant, Derek Sturko, has had at least 3 meetings with all producers. These conversations often included multiple attendees from a single farm.
  - Derek Sturko has also spoken to five farmers individually, often involving others affiliated with a particular business, and two employees from a large farm.
  - Lonny Steward from the Business Risk Management Branch has been involved in several of the calls with Derek Sturko to advise on AgriStability and AgriRecovery.
  - AFF has received letters from one individual farmer, the B.C. Mink Producers Association, and the Canada Mink Breeders Association.
  - One mink farmer and one non-owner (manager at a large farm) have contacted Ardice Todosichuk, Executive Director of the Corporate Policy and Priorities Branch.

## Information Shared with Mink Farmers

- AFF has stated that compensation will not be offered as it is not legally required.
- AFF has advised that Derek Sturko is available to discuss each operator's circumstances and plans, and potential resources available to assist them with the transition.
- AFF has provided a list of supports available to farmers and their employees (e.g. business development and planning, employee transition and re-training, mental health, etc.). – see attachment
- There is possible partial support for lost revenue, but what is available under AgriStability and AgriRecovery will likely be a small portion of the costs farmers will incur. Farmers are not currently receiving support under either program.
- AFF is aware of agricultural or other businesses seeking to locate or expand their operations in the Fraser Valley. No information has been requested by producers.
- Several agricultural organizations (e.g. BC Agriculture Council and Western Agriculture Labour Initiative) are willing to connect farmers and their employees to other agricultural commodities in the Fraser Valley that need employees. No producer has accepted this offer.
- AFF is funding translation services available to help with employee transition.

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**Legal history**

Advice/Recommendations; Legal Information

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Advice/Recommendations; Legal Information

**Jurisdictional Comparison**

- The vaccination program in Nova Scotia is a pilot project on only five farms to vaccinate 54,000 mink with the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine. This project does not cover all farms, as StatsCan shows that there were 43 farms as of 2018, and 74,300 mink on farms as of December 31, 2020. The project ran through December 2021, and it is unknown if it has continued.
- The funding from the federal government for this project is part of previously announced funding for the agricultural sector in Nova Scotia, not new funding.
- We are not aware of any other provinces undertaking similar vaccination pilot projects to Nova Scotia.
- As a result of the pandemic, many European countries have either implemented or accelerated plans to ban mink farming.
  - The Netherlands:
    - Originally banned mink farming in 2013 with a transition period to phase out farms by 2024
    - Following a COVID-19 outbreak at more than 40 farms, the phase out timeline was brought up to March 2021.
  - Minks at the SARS-CoV-2 affected farms were culled in the interest of public health. Ireland
    - In 2021 Cabinet gave approval for a ban on fur farming to go into effect in 2022.
    - This legislation will require all fur farms to shut down by the end of 2022.
  - France
    - Legislation passed
    - No new farms will be authorized, and all existing farms must close by 2025.
  - Italy
    - The Ministry of Health had previously instituted a ban on breeding mink for the whole of 2021.
    - In December 2021, the government passed legislation which banned fur farming as of January 1, 2022.
    - The ban on breeding continued and all farms must close by June 30, 2022.
- The Danish government has had to compensate mink farmers as the country ordered a cull of all mink in the country without having the proper legal authority. In B.C., we have not ordered a cull and are providing a transition period for farmers, so we are not offering compensation.
- The U.S. House of Representatives also recently passed a bill containing a ban on mink farming to protect public health from SARS-CoV-2. This ban has bi-partisan support.

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- Government decided to ban mink farming based on the location of the mink farms in an urban area which may not be the case in other jurisdictions. FHA advised that an outbreak stemming from any of the farms would be difficult to control and contact tracing would not be possible. Based on the PHO and public health official's understanding of the pandemic, government decided that a ban on mink farming was the best way to protect public health in B.C.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The ministry will be engaging in compliance and enforcement work to ensure that mink farmers are meeting the requirements of the new legislation.
- The ministry is developing a compliance plan to inform compliance and enforcement procedures.
- Inspections are expected to commence in June to ensure no mink were bred, as June is typically when mink pups are born.
- FHA has ongoing public health orders on all mink farms requiring disease surveillance and reports. Ministry staff continue to work with FHA on disease surveillance.
- Since December 2020, the Ministry has performed 1,039 tests for SARS-CoV-2 in mink.
- The BCCDC, on behalf of the closed Animal Health Centre, will continue to perform tests for SARS-CoV-2 in mink as part of the public health orders.

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## Mink Sector Transition Supports and Opportunities

The following document outlines supports available for both mink farm owners and employees. The document has been divided into two sections: an Overview of Sector Transition Opportunities section, which outlines the supports available to farm owners; and an Overview of Employment and Training Opportunities section, which outlines the different supports and opportunities available for mink farm employees to find new employment.

### Overview of Sector Transition Opportunities

The section provides an overview of the transition opportunities and provincial government supports available to mink farmers. There are options for the farmers to transition their farms to other agricultural industries. Mink farmers may be eligible for application to federal and provincial funding programs to aid in their transition to other industries. These programs include: the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act program, Advanced Payment Program, the Agricultural Clean Technology Program: Adoption Stream and/or Agricultural Climate Solutions - On-Farm Climate Action Fund, the Youth Employment and Skills Program, and the AgriBusiness Planning Program.

### Sector and Employer Level Supports

#### *Community Workforce Response Grant*

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) provides sector-level supports through the [Community Workforce Response Grant](#) program, funded through the Workforce Development Agreement. Industry, sector, and employment organizations (i.e.: B.C. Mink Producers Association) are eligible to access these programs.

| Funding Stream  | Funding Description  | Funding Amount  | Intake Period   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <b><u>COVID Response:</u></b><br><b><u>Workforce</u></b><br><b><u>Shortages</u></b> | Supports sectors and industries to address the skills training needs of workers impacted by COVID-19. Provides funding for training, employment services and financial supports for unemployed and employed participants who require upskilling or training to prepare for changing job requirements related to COVID-19 or economic recovery opportunities. | Maximum funding per application is \$300,000.<br><br>Maximum funding per participant is \$15,000 per fiscal year (April 1 to March 31). | Accepting applications October 18, 2021 – November 30, 2021.<br><br>Skills training begins January 1, 2022 – March 1, 2022. |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b><u>Emerging Priorities</u></b>                   | Supports communities experiencing workforce challenges or emerging opportunities that require skills training to address. Some reasons for the shift may be a new economic development opportunity or an ongoing transition in the local labour market that has resulted from an industry closure or expansion, a natural disaster, or other conditions that have impacted employment in the community. |   |  |
| <b><u>Skills Training for Economic Recovery</u></b> | Provides short-term skills training to people impacted by COVID-19 so they can develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies for good job opportunities while the economy recovers. Eligible costs include skills training, employment assistance services, participant financial supports, and up to 10% of the total costs of project delivery to support project administration.                   | Maximum funding per participant is \$8,000.<br><br>8 participants (minimum) per cohort. | Accepting applications May 25, 2021 – December 31, 2021.<br><br>Skills training begins June 8, 2021 – February 28, 2022. |

### *Sector Labour Market Partnerships Program*

The [Sector Labour Market Partnerships \(SLMP\) Program](#) helps industry and employers understand and respond to changing labour market demands. The Program provides funding for partnership-led projects that address broader sector and regional labour market issues within British Columbia's diverse economy. To be eligible for funding, projects must clearly address sector or regional labour market issues within British Columbia. Generally, this means a current or anticipated imbalance between supply (workers) and demand (jobs), or a lack of appropriate skills and experience to meet the needs of a changing workplace.

Government recognizes the immense impacts of COVID-19 on British Columbians and that many SLMP project partners provide important services, training and learning resources to communities and sectors across the province, including those who are especially vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19.

| <b>Funding Stream</b>                                   | <b>Funding Description</b>  | <b>Funding Amount</b>  | <b>Intake Period</b>                  |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Sector Labour Market Partnerships Program</u></b> | The SLMP program guidelines are currently being updated to provide greater clarity and transparency regarding current program priorities and how to apply for funding. In the interim, projects will be prioritized | SLMP staff assist with the development of project budgets. There is no maximum financial | Applications are accepted year-round. |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  | <p>for funding that best support B.C.'s economic recovery from COVID-19. These include building workforce resilience (projects that enable B.C.'s workforce to be nimble, adaptive and relevant in times of change through innovative initiatives that increase workforce resilience) and increasing workforce participation (projects that help people get the information and support they need to upskill, find jobs and return to work as the economy strengthens, and ensure B.C.'s vulnerable and under-represented populations are not left behind as the labour market recovers).</p> | <p>support per contract. Funding will be based on project requirements within available SLMP funds and priorities.</p> |  |
|--|---|--|--|

*Employer Training Grant Program*

The [B.C. Employer Training Grant \(ETG\) program](#) supports skills training to address provincial labour market needs. The goal of the ETG is to help British Columbians access the skills training needed to adapt to the changing requirements of jobs and the labour market while encouraging employer involvement in the training of their employees. The “C19 Impacted Worker Training Stream” under the ETG could apply to the mink sector transition plan if agriculture sectors/businesses applied to train and employ workers exiting the mink sector.

| Funding Stream   | Funding Description  | Funding Amount   | Intake Period  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b><u>C19 Impacted Worker Training Stream</u></b></p> | <p>Supports British Columbians that are employed or have been employed in a sector where job opportunities have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (including agriculture). At the time of application, participants must be one of the following: Unemployed but will be employed by the applicant upon completion of training; employed by the applicant and requiring new skills necessary for the employer's business to survive, recover and/or grow; or employed by another employer in an impacted sector but working reduced hours due to COVID-19 and will be employed full-time by the applicant upon completion of training.</p> | <p>Employers may receive 100% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per participant per fiscal year.</p> <p>Employers are eligible to receive up to \$300,000 per fiscal year (April 1 – March 31). All costs are paid for in full by the employer (and then reimbursed).</p> | <p>Accepting applications effective June 25, 2021.</p> <p>Skills training begins September 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022.</p> |

## Overview of Employment and Training Supports

This section provides an overview of the provincial government employment, training and funding supports available to mink farm employees. All programs are administered through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR), supported by the federal government through the Workforce Development Agreement. This document also includes a summary of agriculture-specific training programs and employment opportunities which can be leveraged by workers leaving the mink sector, ensuring sustainable employment with a commensurate salary in the same communities, and alleviating the labour deficits that exist within the agriculture sector.

### Individual Level Supports

#### *WorkBC Centres*

[WorkBC Centre - Abbotsford](#)

[WorkBC Centre - Aldergrove](#)

[WorkBC Centre - Langley](#)

[WorkBC Centre - Chilliwack](#)

WorkBC Centres are funded by SDPR and operated through independent contractors in various communities across B.C. WorkBC Centres provide training and resources to help individuals find and maintain permanent employment. Services are offered virtually, in person, or a combination of both. Clients are welcomed through an intake process beginning with a needs assessment to determine resource requirements to best support an individual. WorkBC Centres provide short-term training courses (i.e.: occupational certificates for forklift operators or first aid attendants) and longer-term education ranging from 6 months to one year (tuition covered up to \$7,500 annually). WorkBC Employment Services offers personal employment planning, group or individual workshops, job search services, skills enhancement services such as academic upgrading and training, customized employment and work experience placement services for clients with significant barriers to employment, and self-employment services. Funding supports are available for expenses such as

dependent care, transportation to get to job interviews or training, essential work clothing, tools, supplies, or equipment. Services are available to individuals who are unemployed, precariously employed, or have received notification of imminent layoff.

*Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector – Immediate Employment Options*

There are currently (as of November 9, 2021) 167 agriculture-related jobs in Abbotsford, Langley, and Chilliwack that pay between \$15.20 - \$30.00/hour and require no education (107 jobs) or a high school diploma (60 jobs). Jobs are added and removed from the [Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector](#) on an ongoing basis. Workers on mink farms earned approximately \$20.00 – \$22.00/hour in these communities, and there are many positions in the agriculture sector that may offer a logical and reasonable transition. The table below provides a summary of jobs advertised in Abbotsford, Langley and Chilliwack on the Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector as of November 9, 2021.

|            | Education     | Jobs | Salary Range           | Examples of Jobs   |
|------------|---------------|------|------------------------|--|
| Abbotsford | None required | 68   | \$15.20 - \$30.00/hour | Nursery Worker at Mann Farms Market and Estate Winery (\$15.20/hour)<br>Dairy Farm Worker at Dykman Cattle Company Ltd. (\$16.50/hour)<br>Farm Worker at B&C Blueberry Farm (\$17.00/hour)<br>Farm Supervisor at HQ Mushroom Farm Ltd. (\$20.00 – 25.00/hour)<br>Greenhouse Supervisor at Randhawa Farms Ltd. (\$30.00/hour) |
|            | High school   | 38   | \$15.20 - \$30.00/hour | Herdsman at Canal Farms Ltd. (\$15.20/hour)<br>General Farm Worker at I&P Farm Labour Contractors Ltd. (\$16.70/hour)<br>Farm Operations Supervisor at Mahil Farms Ltd. (\$21.94/hour)<br>Farm Manager at Tarsem Berry Farm (\$30.00/hour)   |
| Langley    | None required | 19   | \$15.20 - \$22.00/hour | General Farm Worker at Sanghera Farm Ltd. (\$15.20/hour)<br>Chicken and Turkey Catcher at 0830079 BC Ltd (\$16.50/hour)<br>General Farm Worker at G2G Berry Farm Inc. (\$17.00/hour)<br>Farm Supervisor at San Farming Ltd. (\$22.00/hour)   |
|            | High school   | 10   | \$16.00 - \$22.50/hour | Harvest Worker at Sierra Farms Ltd. (\$16.00/hour)<br>Specialized Livestock Poultry Worker at Rocky Ridge Turkey Farm (18.50/hour)<br>Farm Supervisor at Blueberry Haven Ltd. (\$19.00/hour)<br>Farm Manager at Sierra Farms Ltd. (\$22.50/hour)   |
| Chilliwack | None required | 20   | \$15.20 - \$21.00/hour | General Farm Worker at Clayburn Nursery Ltd. (\$15.20/hour)<br>Greenhouse Worker at Little Mountain Greenhouses (\$15.20-\$20.00/hour)   |

|  |             |    |                        |  |
|--|-------------|----|------------------------|--|
|  |             |    |                        | Dairy Farm Worker at Grace Mar Farms Ltd. (\$16.50/hour)<br>Farm Supervisor at Trilean Pork Ltd. (\$21.00/hour)  |
|  | High school | 12 | \$16.00 - \$25.50/hour | General Farm Worker at 1328293 B.C.LTD (\$16.00/hour)<br>Shipping Lead Hand at Rainbow Greenhouses Inc. (\$17.00-19.00/hour)<br>Farm Manager at Clayburn Nursery Ltd. (\$23.00/hour)<br>Farm Manager at 1328293 B.C.LTD (\$25.50/hour) |

### *Skills Training for Employment*

The Skills Training for Employment (STE) program administered through AEST meets the needs of vulnerable and under-represented groups by providing skills training and employment supports to participants to help them obtain sustainable employment. STE has several streams to address and support specific challenges and populations; programs include skills training and employment supports to help participants obtain sustainable employment.

**STE: Impacted Workers** - Supporting British Columbians living in communities impacted by mill closures<sup>1</sup> and shift reductions, this program provides access to skills training and employment supports to assist participants in achieving sustainable employment. Eligible participants include British Columbians in an impacted community that are unemployed, underemployed, or precariously employed. Priority may be given to individuals who are not eligible for Employment Insurance.

| Program | Location | Training  | Supports  |
|---------|----------|---|---|
| DeNovo  | Langley  | Computer skills and short-term occupational certificate training, hands-on training, a job club, and work experience. | Wage subsidies, mentorships, direct matching to employers and Indigenous cultural components are available if needed; also, childcare, transportation, training allowance, living supports and cost-sharing tuition assistance. |

**STE: Individuals Facing Multiple Barriers** - This program provides individuals facing multiple barriers to employment with the skills training and employment supports needed to overcome obstacles and achieve sustainable employment. The program stream is primarily open to unemployed or precariously employed British Columbians who face two or more barriers to employment. Examples include life circumstances, limited skills, lack of work experience, or lack of networks, among others.

<sup>1</sup> Confirmation is required to determine if this can apply generally to any industry closure.

| <b>Program</b>  | <b>Location</b>       | <b>Training</b>  | <b>Supports</b>   |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|
| <b>DeNovo</b>   | Langley               | Computer skills and short-term occupational certificate training, hands-on training, a job club, and work experience.  | Wage subsidies, mentorships, direct matching to employers and Indigenous cultural components are available if needed; also, childcare, transportation, training allowance, living supports and cost-sharing tuition assistance. |
| <b>Skills for Life and Work</b>                                       | Surrey                | Provides training for occupational certifications such as FoodSafe, First Aid and Superhost. There are presentations from local employers, job placements (with possible wage subsidies) and a job club. Targeted industries include customer/food services, maintenance, warehousing, transportation, manufacturing, construction, and security.  | Childcare, transportation, clothing/work supplies.  |
| <b>SAHARA – Substance Abuse Health and Recovery Awareness Program</b> | Surrey                | Group counselling, training on digital literacy skills, Forklift and First Aid. Also includes one-on-one coaching, on-the-job training and language supports. Targeted towards visible minority men in addiction recovery to prepare participants for work in a warehouse environment.   | Transportation, living allowance, work clothing.  |
| <b>Chilliwack Job Options</b>   | Chilliwack            | Occupational certifications for courses such as FoodSafe, Forklift and Occupational First Aid. Job search/maintenance workshops and on-the-job training is provided, along with possible wage subsidies.   | Childcare, transportation, training allowance, clothing/work gear.  |
| <b>Learn and Earn Program</b>   | Abbotsford and Surrey | three streams: Prepare (employment preparation training), Employ (attachment to the workforce through EMBERS) and Up-Skill (skills training for higher-skilled jobs in construction and other trades). It offers occupational certification training such as Hoist Operator, Construction Safety Officer and Traffic Control Person, as well as mentorship, job placements, on-the-job training, and coaching. | Childcare, transportation, work equipment, food, training allowance.  |

**STE: Older Workers (55+)** - This program provides the skills training and employment supports needed for people who are 55 years of age or older to overcome barriers and achieve sustainable employment. The program stream is primarily open to unemployed, or precariously employed British Columbians aged 55 or older facing one or more barriers to employment: current skills don't match industry demands, lack of technical skills and appropriate training opportunities and/or lack of familiarity with current hiring practices (such as online job applications and social media resources).

| <b>Program</b>  | <b>Location</b>                     | <b>Training</b>   | <b>Supports</b>   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Experience Matters!</b>  | Based on participant needs          | Short-term certificate and on-the-job training, work experience (with possible wage subsidies), employer matching, job placement, mentorship, and coaching services.  | Childcare, transportation, disability supports, work gear   |
| <b>STRIDE for Older Workers (Skills Training Results in Direct Education/ Employment)</b> | Abbotsford                          | Short-term certification training, work experience, and occupational skills training.   | Childcare, transportation, interview/work clothing, possible wage subsidies.                      |
| <b>The 55+ Advantage (Creating Opportunities for Work – Maximizing Skills for Life)</b>   | Abbotsford, Agassiz, and Chilliwack | Indigenous cultural components, short-term certificate training and job shadowing as well as volunteer and work experience.   | Childcare, transportation, work gear, disability supports, refreshments, possible wage subsidies. |
| <b>Intercultural Logistics and Transportation Operations for Older Workers</b>            | Surrey                              | Short-term certificate and occupational skills training for employment as a class 4 commercial driver, a transportation logistics/dispatcher, or a taxi driver. The program has Indigenous cultural components, digital literacy and sole proprietorship training, and work experience. | Transporting, weekly luncheons, refreshments, license fees.                                       |

AEST also administers STE Economic Recovery Programs (STE ERP) which are designed to meet the needs of vulnerable and under-represented groups by providing skills training and employment supports to help people most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**STE ERP: Individuals with Criminal Justice System Involvement<sup>2</sup>** - This program provides skills training and supports to people who have had prior criminal justice system involvement, so they can obtain sustainable employment. Eligible participants include unemployed or precariously employed British Columbians who have been incarcerated and/or had prior criminal justice involvement and have one or more of the following barriers to employment at the time of intake: housing instability, history of addictions and substance abuse, mental health challenges, lack of social networks and connections, lack of recent work experience, limited literacy skills, low self-esteem, and/or low income.

| Program   | Location | Training   | Supports  |
|---|----------|--|---|
| <b>Acquiring Community-based Employment Skills (ACES)</b> | Surrey   | Work experience and skills for employment in several occupations (construction, oil and gas, forestry, roofing, and firefighting). | Certificate-based training, life-skills and employment readiness workshops including resume and cover letter development, interview skills training, supported work experience, one-to-one support and mentorship, and continued training and follow up supports. |

**STE ERP: Recent Immigrants and Visible Minorities<sup>3</sup>** - This program helps immigrants and visible minorities gain new skills and obtain culturally safe, sustainable employment. Eligible participants include unemployed or precariously employed British Columbians who are recent immigrants (within 10 years of landing) and/or visible minorities. Additionally, participants must have at least one of the following barriers to employment: limited English language skills, lack of networks and/or connections, lack of Canadian work experience, lack/limited knowledge of navigating the B.C. labour market, and/or have been impacted by racism or discrimination. Training may include knowledge of work culture in B.C. and job search supports. Participants may also be connected with employers for hands-on work experience. Participants also receive wraparound supports such as childcare, transportation and mental health supports.

| Program                      | Location | Training  | Supports  |
|------------------------------|----------|---|---|
| <b>Tech Train for Remote</b> | Online   | Helps immigrants and visible minorities develop skills for employment in retail, accommodation, and | Wraparound supports such as childcare, transportation and mental health supports. |

<sup>2</sup> Funding available until March 31, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Funding available until March 31, 2022.

|  |            |  |   |
|--|------------|--|---|
| <b>Work and Wellness Program</b>                                 |            | food sectors. Training also includes essential skills like digital literacy, e-commerce, IT, and office administration.  |   |
| <b>Immigrant Skills Training for High-Demand Sectors Program</b> | Online     | The Immigrant Skills Training for High-Demand Sectors program helps immigrants, francophones, and visible minorities find sustainable employment in high-demand industries. Training includes sector-specific language skills, essential skills, soft skills, job search skills, and occupational health and safety. | Wraparound supports such as childcare, transportation and mental health supports. |
| <b>Red Seal Construction Trades Training</b>                     | Surrey     | The Red Seal Construction Trades Training program provides unemployed immigrants and visible minorities with training and supports to pass the Inter-Provincial exam conducted by the Industry Training Authority (ITA). Training is provided in areas with skill shortages in the construction sector.              | Wraparound supports such as childcare, transportation and mental health supports. |
| <b>Immigrant Job Shop</b>  | Abbotsford | The Immigrant Job Shop provides immigrants and visible minorities with skills to seek and maintain employment. Training includes essential skills, workplace English, computer skills, life skills, and customer service skills.   | Wraparound supports such as childcare, transportation and mental health supports. |

## Animal Health Centre Review – Recommendations and Implementation

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In spring 2018, Don Wright, Deputy Minister to Premier John Horgan, concluded a review of the Animal Health Centre after some of the services performed were called into question.
- Deputy Minister Wright found that nothing in the review, conducted by Deloitte, shows any evidence of “dubious data or conflict of interest”.
- The Deloitte Report did identify some areas in which improvements could be made.
- The Director of the Animal Health Centre and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries’ (Ministry) Deputy Minister accepted the recommendations, and the Ministry is working to implement all of them.
- The Animal Health Centre makes science-based decisions and it is important that the public trusts the information that is used to inform policy decisions.
- Our priority with undertaking the review was to ensure that the public and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) can trust information that the Animal Health Centre provides as part of the fish health audit.
- I am pleased that the review found that the Animal Health Centre is working well on behalf of British Columbians, without any conflicts of interest.
- The Animal Health Centre is extremely important to our province’s agriculture sector.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Deloitte Review provided recommendations for the Provincial Government’s consideration to address the potential for real or perceived conflict of interest.
- The Deloitte Review also provided related recommendations to improve communication and collaboration amongst stakeholders working to research and understand the risk and impacts related to fish health in the province.

### Deloitte Recommendations and status:

- Conduct conflict of interest assessments – *Complete* – An audit by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) conducted in May 2018 assessed conflict of interest policies and procedures and found no issues or areas for improvement. The Animal Health Centre (AHC) will continue to request from each

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accrediting body that a specific section of their audit report be dedicated to addressing conflict of interest.

- Develop an industry expense reimbursement – *Complete* - A policy is in place to ensure the AHC does not receive any industry support for travel. These travel costs will be covered by the Ministry.
- Consider stronger separation of roles – *Complete* - A Fish Pathologist was hired in August 2018 and has been assigned the regulatory (FHASP) audit submissions. An additional pathologist was hired in September 2019 for fish submissions.
- Seek to expedite fish disease case definitions – *Completed in 2021* – Case definitions (HSMI in Atlantic salmon and jaundice in Chinook salmon) were established during the Fish Health Technical Work in 2020 and the finalized report is publicly available on the DFO website.
- Ensure external communications are supported – *Complete* – The Ministry added a position to support improved external communications.
- Strengthen contracts with key stakeholders – *In Progress* - The AHC will initiate a process with legal counsel to review MOUs to develop appropriate language with respect to protecting Ministry staff from perceived or real conflict of interest situations.
- Develop AHC-specific conflict of interest guidelines – *In Progress* - To foster an ethical culture in the BC Public Service, a new corporate requirement has been introduced for all employees to annually review the Standards of Conduct and Oath of Employment. In consultation with the PSA, the Ministry will develop materials tailored to the AHC and more broadly to the Plant and Animal Health Branch.
- Enforce marine biosecurity measures – *In Progress* - The Minister’s Advisory Committee on Finfish Aquaculture released its recommendations to government in January 2018. The Province has relayed relevant recommendations in these areas to DFO and is working on their implementation.
- Improve the level of education and awareness- *In Progress* - The Ministry added a position to support improved external communications.

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## BC SPCA Farm Inspections Pilot

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Protecting animal care and welfare is a shared goal, and the BC SPCA and farm operators both have important roles to play to achieve that goal.
- The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (PCAA) provides the BC SPCA the authority to conduct proactive inspections under s.15.1.
- The BC SPCA notified the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) and the various commodity boards of its intention to conduct unannounced, proactive farm animal welfare inspections in June 2021, and all parties have been in communication since then to ensure these inspections are carried out appropriately.
- As these inspections are legally permitted without a warrant under PCAA s. 15.1, operators are required to allow BC SPCA inspectors access to their farms during ordinary business hours.
- Industry associations should inform their members of their responsibility to allow BC SPCA inspectors access to their farm during business hours.
- Despite the broad authority under the PCAA, inspectors will only enter a property with consent of the owner or operator. While the inspections will not be pre-announced, inspectors have been and will be flexible and work with the operator to minimize disruption of regular farming activities.
- Inspectors, AFF staff and veterinarians attending these inspections will observe all necessary biosecurity protocols for each farm, including showering in and out of the operation, and bringing and utilizing all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). All of the safety protocols related to COVID-19 will also be followed.
- Protecting farm animal welfare and ensuring that animals are not in distress is a priority for AFF, the BC SPCA, farmers, and the public in B.C.
- These inspections are not meant to target farmers but are an opportunity to work together to promote and enhance animal welfare.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Government of British Columbia, through the PCAA, created the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) in 1895 and gave the Society the power to enforce the PCAA. In 2011, the BC government amended the PCAA to include broader inspection powers for “regulated activities.”
- Section 15.1 of the PCAA provides the BC SPCA, as authorized agents, the ability to enter “any premises or a vehicle where an operator is engaging in a regulated activity for the purpose of determining whether this *Act* and the regulations made under it are being complied with.”

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- On June 23, 2021, the BC SPCA informed the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries via letter of their intention to conduct proactive welfare inspections of turkey, pork, beef, dairy, eggs and chicken farms (2 farm inspections per commodity).
- BC SPCA sent letters on June 23 & 24, 2021 to the Executive Director of the BC Dairy Association and the BC Chicken Marketing Board, respectively, announcing the BC SPCA's intention to conduct unannounced proactive inspections of a subset of farms beginning in mid-2021.
- Prior to June 2021, the BC SPCA had not used this section of the PCAA; inspecting farms only after a cruelty complaint was received. In part, this was due to a resource and capacity issue stemming from a limited numbers of constables and large workloads.
- In late June, AFF executive met with the BC SPCA CEO to obtain information regarding the scope of the inspections, enforcement policies and operational procedures, training of officers, etc. Subsequent to that meeting, it was confirmed that the BC SPCA does not have approved policies or operational procedures for the society for administering the enforcement powers of the PCAA; instead, they have training manuals and standard operating procedures.
- Operators have previously raised concerns to the ministry about the BC SPCA's levels of knowledge and understanding of farm animal welfare and farm operations, and are not likely to support or welcome these proactive inspections.
- The ministry established an agreement with the BC SPCA to have AFF staff present as observers during the inspections.
- Several meetings were held with the BC SPCA, commodity board representatives, and AFF staff to discuss the process of the inspection pilot program.
- BC SPCA will be drafting a final report to provide an overview of the pilot program. However, the report has been deferred as the inspections have been delayed by fire/flood/landslide emergency events, difficulty finding a veterinarian, and impacts from the Omnicron variant.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- While other jurisdictions in Canada allow for on-farm animal welfare inspections; Ontario's *Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act* also allows for proactive, risk-based inspections to ensure compliance with legislation. The Canadian *Criminal Code* prohibits anyone from willfully causing animals to suffer from neglect, pain or injury and is enforced by police services, provincial and territorial Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and/or provincial and territorial ministries of agriculture.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- N/A

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

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## **BC SPCA Investigations on Farms**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- Animal welfare is a priority in B.C., and government expects everyone to treat animals with care and respect.
- The Ministry remains committed to ensuring that animals are respected and treated with a high standard of care in our agricultural system.
- If gaps in animal welfare are identified, the Ministry will act appropriately to improve outcomes.
- B.C. ranchers and livestock producers take great pride in the care they provide their animals and in their role as stewards of the land. I believe the vast majority are meeting the standards in the National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice for farm animals.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Under B.C.'s *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (PCAA) the BC SPCA is mandated to respond to animals in distress and investigate animal welfare concerns.
- Prior to June 2021 BC SPCA farms inspections only occurred after a cruelty complaint was received.
- In June 2021, the BC SPCA notified the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries that as per section 15.1 of the PCAA, the BC SPCA would be starting a pilot program exercising its authority to conduct unannounced inspections of regulated activities during business hours.
- The ministry has an agreement with the SPCA to provide a ministry observer for all of the pilot commercial farm inspections. The agreement expires April 30, 2022.
- The SPCA will be preparing a report of their findings from the pilot commercial farm inspection program.
- The BC SPCA conducts approximately 8,000 cruelty investigations each year.
- The majority of SPCA investigations involve companion animals; in 2018, 82% of all BC SPCA investigations were related to dogs and cats; 18% were related to farm animals.
- Under the PCAA, the Animal Care Codes of Practice Regulation (the Regulation) came into force on June 1, 2019, to provide further protection for farm animals by establishing reasonable and generally accepted practices of animal management. The Regulation references the National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice for farm animals (NFACC Codes) as reasonable and generally accepted practices of animal management.
- To provide oversight of BC SPCA animal seizures, the B.C. Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) hears appeals about certain animal custody and related cost decisions of the BC SPCA under the PCAA.



**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In Canada, eight provinces and two territories have a Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Not all have the legislated authority to conduct on-farm inspections.
- In January 2019, the Ontario Supreme Court found the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) powers to be unconstitutional. Following this court decision, the OSPCA announced that it would no longer enforce animal welfare legislation after having done so for over a century. The province was then responsible for quickly passing new legislation for an interim animal welfare enforcement model and then for developing a new animal welfare act and a new provincial government-based enforcement system.
- The Canadian *Criminal Code* prohibits anyone from willfully causing animals to suffer from neglect, pain or injury and is enforced by police services, provincial and territorial Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and/or provincial and territorial ministries of agriculture.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

**BC Government funding of the BC SPCA**

- Most recently, under the 2020 British Columbia Financial Support for Animal Care Facilities Initiative, B.C. provided the BC SPCA with an interim grant payment of \$1,463,342 to defray the costs of caring for animals in their facilities and investigating animal cruelty allegations during the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$5m capital grant in 2015 and \$5 million in 2017 to fund replacement of aging facilities.
- \$100,000 grant in 2011 to defray the costs of investigating sled dog cruelty allegations.
- \$250,000 grant in 2010/2011 from the B.C. Gaming Commission for spay/neuter programs.
- The Province has provided sponsored Crown leases for many of BC SPCA facilities.

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## Codes of Practice for Animal Welfare

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In 2018 and 2019, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) staff worked with livestock and poultry associations and the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) to bring all the National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice (Codes) into B.C. regulation.
- B.C.'s livestock and farm animal operators are among the best in Canada and the Codes support their good work. Building the Codes into regulation provides consumers with confidence around these management practices and protects farmers and ranchers where practices are misperceived or challenged.
- Ministry staff continue to work with animal welfare stakeholders to monitor potential issues and ensure the necessary animal welfare policies and regulatory frameworks are in place in B.C.
- Ministry staff reviewed and provided comments to the National Farm Animal Care Council on revisions to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Mink. Most of the ministry's comments on the Farmed Mink Code were incorporated into the final version of the document.
- Ministry staff are reviewing and providing comments on the proposed revisions to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle.

### B.C. FARM INDUSTRY REVIEW BOARD (BCFIRB)

- BCFIRB is an independent tribunal, and one of their roles is to hear appeals of specific animal seizure and/or cost decisions of the BC SPCA under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (PCAA) to provide timely and animal welfare-focused decisions.
- Codes serve as reasonable and generally accepted practices of farm animal management in B.C. and are used to guide BCFIRB appeal decisions.

### ROLE OF REGULATED COMMODITY BOARDS

- B.C. commodity boards have made animal care and biosecurity standards mandatory for their producers. This demonstrates how serious the B.C. farmed animal industry is about protecting animal health and welfare.

### ANIMAL PROTECTION FRAMEWORK

- B.C. has among the strongest penalties in Canada for causing animal distress. Charges under B.C.'s PCAA 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.

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**BACKGROUND:**

- The PCAA is the primary provincial animal welfare legislation and falls under the responsibility of the Ministry.
- The PCAA provides a legislative mandate for the BC SPCA to enforce animal protection laws in B.C.
- The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) brings together diverse stakeholders (industry, the federal and provincial governments, enforcement agencies, and animal welfare groups) to develop the Codes for the care and handling of farm animals.
- The NFACC develops the Codes based on both science and consensus. Industry stakeholders are active participants during each Code development process, which typically takes approximately three years to complete.
- In 2015, the NFACC Codes for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle were made “reasonable and generally accepted practices of animal management” in PCAA regulation.
- While failure to abide by the Codes is not necessarily an offence, following the Codes is a defense from conviction of causing animal distress.
- In the summer and early fall of 2018, Ministry staff engaged with 20 livestock/farm animal associations and representatives of the BC SPCA, RCMP and Ag-Safe B.C. to determine the best way to implement the Codes.
- In February 2019, another 11 NFACC Codes were included, but not in effect until June 2019, in PCAA regulation covering:
  - Beef, Bison, Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys, Equines, Farmed Fox, Farmed Mink, Pigs, Pullets and Laying Hens, Rabbits, Sheep, and Veal Cattle.
- To support implementation of the regulatory changes, the ministry hosted a Codes working session on March 15, 2019, which was well represented by all the industry associations that took part in earlier consultations. Discussion at the session focused on concerns, best implementation practices, and BC SPCA Special Provincial Constable training.
- Training of BC SPCA Special Provincial Constables on the Codes took place throughout 2019.
- In Spring 2021, ministry staff reviewed the proposed changes to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Mink. Staff specifically raised concerns regarding the removal of a deadline to increase cage sizes, removal of nest boxes, and the use of combustion engines as a CO<sub>2</sub> source for euthanasia.
- As a result of comments from the ministry and other organizations/individuals, the NFACC finalized the amendments to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farmed Mink in a way that better protects animal welfare. The amendments include:
  - A five-year deadline for the increase in cage sizes, with no opportunity for extension;
  - Clearer guidelines around nest boxes and when they may be removed, including the maximum amount of time they can be removed/blocked for; and
  - Removal of the proposal for the use of combustion engines as a CO<sub>2</sub> source.

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**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Several other provinces include NFACC Codes in regulation, although there is variation among provinces in how this is done, for example:
  - Some provinces, such as Ontario, create a regulation that makes the requirements contained in a particular Code as legally enforceable standards.
  - Other provinces, such as Saskatchewan, take an approach like B.C.'s, with the Codes functioning as a defense for those accused of causing animal distress.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Ministry staff will be reviewing the proposed amendments to the Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle and providing comments to NFACC on the ministry's position.
- In 2021, the BC SPCA began proactively inspecting farming operations as part of a pilot project and used the Codes as guide. The ministry has sent staff to act as impartial observers on these inspections. For more information on the pilot please see Estimates Note: BC SPCA Farm Inspections Pilot.

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## **Animal Welfare - Domestic/ Wild Sheep Disease Risks**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (M. ovi) is a bacterium that infects the nasal passages of wild and domestic sheep and goats.
- In wild sheep (bighorns and thinhorns) M. ovi is considered a serious population threat and is associated with massive all-aged die-offs due to pneumonia often followed by years of poor lamb survival rates. It can occasionally cause disease in domestic sheep (sheep) and goats, but the primary concern is transmission to wild sheep.
- It does not cause disease in people and is not a food-safety threat.
- The BC Animal Health Center developed a PCR test for M. ovi in 2016 and is currently the only lab in Canada able to test specifically for this pathogen.
- From 2018 to present, AFF has directed efforts to finding common ground and establishing next steps through discussion and the preparation of multiple documents with Ministerial Strategic Advisory Group (MSAG), established in 2018 to advise Minister on M. ovi policies:
  - Policy Analysis: contextualizes the issue and suggests how policy (regulatory change) may address the issue.
  - Historical Document: provides B.C. context from wildlife and domestic sheep and goat points of view, important dates in history and response and actions to date.
  - Non-Regulatory Strategic Action Plan: provides voluntary measures that may be taken in concert with, or without regulatory change. Examples of activities include communications and outreach, education and incentivizing healthy sheep and goat production.
- Additional activities that have been undertaken by AFF include:
  - Strengthening relationship with the B.C. Sheep Federation and B.C. Goat Association
  - Established an online resource library available to MSAG members
  - Funded and provided guidance into research on the prevalence and pathogenesis of M. ovipneumoniae in domestic sheep and goats.
  - Developed a PCR test for M. ovipneumoniae in 2016. AHC remains the only Canadian lab able to test for this pathogen.
  - Tested more than 2500 animals (both domestic and wildlife) from BC.
  - Hosted workshops for producers and veterinarians throughout the province on sheep and goat herd health including a discussion on risks of disease transfer with wild sheep.
  - Extensive one on one consultation with producers on M. ovi testing and management.

**BACKGROUND:**

- M. ovi infection, likely transmitted from domestic sheep or goats, has been implicated in several die-offs and population declines in B.C. bighorn sheep herds over the past several decades. Thinhorn sheep populations in northern B.C. are likely naïve to this pathogen but could face major population declines in an already fragile population if it was introduced.
- In areas of B.C. where bighorn sheep live, approximately 30 percent of sheep flocks (10/30 tested) are infected with M. ovipneumoniae, usually with no associated clinical signs. The prevalence in domestic goats is currently unknown.
- The sheep industry in B.C. is composed of approximately 1,693 farms reporting 59,349 sheep and lambs in B.C. with an estimated farm gate value of approximately \$9.8M (Statistics Canada, 2016). There are approximately 20,000 sheep in regions of B.C. with wild sheep.
- The domestic goat industry in B.C. is composed of 975 farms reporting 14,508 goats (Statistics Canada, 2016) with approximately 5,000 goats in areas with potential contact with wild sheep.
- There is currently no known method to eradicate M. ovi from an infected domestic sheep flock/goat herd. No antibiotics have been proven to clear this pathogen. Research is ongoing both in B.C. and other jurisdictions.
- Minimizing the risk of contact between wild sheep and infected domestic sheep and goats is currently the only way to decrease the risk of transmission and die-offs in wild sheep.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. domestic sheep flocks have a lower prevalence of M. ovi than reported in mainland USA.
- Yukon introduced a control order, officially enacted January 1, 2020, that mandates strict fencing for all sheep and goat farms, requires all sheep and goats to be tested and free of M. ovi, and bans domestic sheep and goats in areas of high risk of contact with wild sheep and goats. Out of the 343 domestic sheep and goats in Yukon at the time of implementation 124 (36 percent) were positive for M. ovi.
- All positive animals and some negative animals on high-prevalence farms were culled. Implementation of this order was very costly and involved government funding of testing, compensation for culled animals, and subsidization of fencing costs.
- All jurisdictions in North America with wild sheep are struggling to find a solution to this very complex issue.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Testing costs so far have been born by the submitter. However, the test continues to have problems with specificity; so positive tests often require further testing and DNA

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sequencing to confirm. This means the actual cost of the test to MAFF often exceeds the cost paid by submitters depending on the number of tests that are positive.

- 5 percent of one FTE in Plant and Animal Health Branch, 10 percent of one FTE and 50 percent of one AUX FTE in the ESSB.

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## **Animal Welfare - Flood/ Heat Dome – Animal Impacts/ Response**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

#### **HEAT DOME**

- The heat dome during the summer of 2021 took many people by surprise, including B.C.'s livestock and poultry producers.
- Despite many livestock and poultry operations using current technology and management tools to minimize animal heat stress, the commonly used tools were not sufficient for prolonged, extreme conditions and significant animal losses did occur.
- These losses are devastating for producers and certainly unfortunate for the animals.
- Long-term impacts on animals are still not fully known but may include reduced animal growth rates, reproduction, and immune function.

#### **Flood**

- The devastating losses of the heat dome were followed by the flooding disaster in November, especially for the hard-hit Fraser Valley.
- There were both immediate and long-term impacts to animals from the flooding.
- Immediate impacts were related to animal relocations, feed shortages, contamination of feed and water, and high water resulting in death.
- Long-term impacts are not yet fully known but depending on various factors, may include decreased growth, production, reproduction and increased disease susceptibility in livestock and poultry.
- I have heard many firsthand accounts of farmers helping farmers, and in many cases making heroic efforts, to save farm animals and provide them care.
- To support farmers and ensure farm animals could continue to be fed, the Province provided up to \$1M in funding from Emergency Management BC to help fill the immediate need of forage as part of the Emergency Flood Forage Program.
- Additionally, the \$228M in federal-provincial government support, as part of the Canada-B.C. Flood Recovery for Food Security Program, helps farmers return to production and covers extraordinary expenses incurred including those related to animal care, replacement feed as well as livestock transportation, and veterinary care.

#### **General**

- Dialogue, collaboration, and advance planning are underway among industry and government to re-assess these events and minimize the animal impacts of future events. This includes topics of infrastructure improvements, management tools, knowledge transfer, and risk mitigation.
- We are also exploring options for increasing our engagement in complex animal welfare issues, including the possibility of upgrading the role of animal welfare

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veterinarian to a full-time position (it is currently part of the role of our Chief Veterinarian).

**BACKGROUND:**

Heat Dome/Heat Wave

- Between June 25-July 1, 2021, a major heat wave hit B.C. with temperatures above 40 C in many parts of the province, causing human and animal suffering, and death.
- While many commercial livestock and poultry barns have ventilation systems to cool animals and minimize heat stress during periods of hot weather, this heat wave was unprecedented in its severity and significant animal losses occurred (actual numbers are not known).
- Other management tools used by producers to minimize the impacts of the heat dome typically included a combination of any of the following: cooling systems; shade; feed withdrawal; maintaining and/or increasing water consumption; the use of electrolytes; and vitamin supplementation.
- Thermal heat stress considers a combination of 'environmental temperature' and 'relative humidity'. 'Temperature Humidity Index (THI)' is commonly used to identify when animals experience thermal heat stress. High producing cows, for example, have a lower THI Threshold where they begin to suffer heat stress. This heat dome created THI values of high concern for all animals.
- Heat stress can lead to reduced food intake, retarded growth, intestinal disequilibrium, lower reproductive performance, and immunity and endocrine disorders in animals.

Flooding

- On November 13, 2021, a major storm descended on the south coast of British Columbia and over the next several days brought massive amounts of rain creating possibly the most destructive and expensive weather disaster in Canadian history.
- Farmers suffered extraordinary damages including losses to homes, properties, farm businesses and animals; animal impacts include both short- and long-term impacts.
- Short-term animal impacts (immediate, at time of the event) included:
  - Emergency relocations of animals and feed to farms outside the impacted areas
    - 25 farms which included 3906 dairy animals and approximately 29,568 poultry were relocated (note- poultry numbers refer to early slaughter, not relocation to another farm).
  - Animal relocations can increase stress and cause physical injuries, digestive upsets, reduced conception, disrupted production, early fetal abortions.
    - Grain shortages and no grain supply on farms due to damaged rail and road infrastructure result in immediate and long-term animal production losses and can cause premature animal death, reproductive & herd health impacts, higher susceptibility to disease.
  - Contamination of feed and water supplies
    - Contaminated water can contain chemicals and microorganisms dangerous to livestock and poultry.

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- Flooding of barns and farm infrastructure
  - Significant animal losses were incurred, especially farmed poultry, hog, fish, and cattle:
    - Poultry – 709k
    - Dairy – 430
    - Hogs – 18k
    - Fish – 282k
- Long-term impacts on animals because of flooding and relocation can include:
  - Decreased growth, production, reproduction, and increased disease susceptibility.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The Province provided up to \$1 million in funding from Emergency Management BC to help fill the immediate need of forage as part of the Emergency Flood Forage Program.
- The 2021 Canada-British Columbia Wildfire and Drought AgriRecovery Initiative additionally provides up to \$20M to help with extraordinary expenses farmers and ranchers incur for feed, shelter, animal health and safety, and the transportation of their livestock because of this year’s wildfires and drought.
- Animal relocation due to flooding is estimated at a cost of \$1.129M reimbursable under EMBC Policy 2.01 Provincial Support for Livestock Relocation During an Emergency
- Additionally, significant expenditures were incurred from government staff supporting animal relocation, emergency feed supplies, etc. during the province’s emergency flood efforts.

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## **AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The B.C. government has programs to help aquaculture, fisheries and seafood companies adopt and research new technology, reduce their environmental footprint, manage business risks, and market their products to consumers in B.C. and around the world.
- Many British Columbians enjoy fresh and local seafood farmed and caught in B.C. The B.C. government supports local producers and harvesters in reaching B.C. customers with the Buy BC campaign.
- The governments of Canada and B.C. are supporting B.C. seafood processors in reaching new customers and improving their sales with international market supports with the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF) and the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).
- B.C.'s seafood sectors continue to face challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic including supply chain disruption, increased operating costs, and labour shortages.
- Recent decisions by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to remove salmon farms, wild salmon closures, and reduce herring harvest are contrary to DFO produced science and are impeding economic opportunities for B.C.'s seafood sectors, including First Nations fisheries. The B.C. Government continues to work with DFO to ensure impacts of these decisions are appropriately mitigated.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- In 2020, B.C. fisheries and aquaculture harvested over 272,000 metric tonnes (MT) of 100 different species of fish, shellfish, and marine plants with a wholesale value of \$1.6B.
- Aquaculture contributed 37 percent of the production (100,000 MT) and 51 percent of the wholesale value (\$822M) of B.C. seafood. Key farmed species include Atlantic salmon, chinook salmon, oysters, mussels, and clams.
- Fisheries contributed 63 percent of production (172,000 MT) and 49 percent of the wholesale value (\$801M) of B.C. seafood. Key wild species include sockeye salmon, Dungeness crab, Pacific hake, Pacific halibut, geoduck, prawns, rockfish, and albacore tuna.

### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Nationally, there are approximately 24 federally administered programs that provide financial support for the fish and seafood sector. Of these, six are specific to certain provinces (Quebec) or regions (Atlantic Fisheries Fund; several Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) funds that are specific to the Atlantic Region). In addition,

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there are three funds specific to First Nations capacity building, including one that is specific to British Columbia. The remaining 15 funds support a range of activities from basic science research to innovation, marketing, and financing.

- Recently, Western Economic Diversification Canada was diversified to Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) and Prairies Economic Development Canada. PacifiCan has several economic development loans programs that the B.C. seafood sector is eligible.
- Each province manages provincially funded programs in concert with the federal programs. The number of each program developed by each province ranges: Newfoundland (1); Nova Scotia (13); Prince Edward Island (9); New Brunswick (7), Quebec (10); Ontario (10), Manitoba (1); B.C. (3). These numbers include federal-provincial cost-shared programs.
- Similar to the federal programs, provincial programs support a range of activities but focus on financial assistance, market development, and labour and skill development.
- Of particular note, all provinces have funding programs for loans, loan guarantees or access to capital for business development. British Columbia does not have a program to provide access to capital for business development with the exception of the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) Aquaculture Development Source fund for First Nations aquaculture business development (this excludes fisheries).

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- **FACTAP:** For the 2021/22 fiscal, the province expended \$80K to support eight projects (four aquaculture, two fishing, and two processing projects) with total project costs of \$3.3M.
- **CFSOF:** B.C.'s current allocation is \$80K for one project worth \$1.3M, is national in scope and focuses on domestic market access initiatives. This project will be completed in the 2022/23 fiscal year.
- **BCSRIF, Buy BC and CAP:** (B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program; B.C. Traceability Adoptions and Traceability Value Chain Programs) are currently outlined within program allocations.
- **RAS Business Study:** \$85K was allocated to undertake a business case study to understand the feasibility of RAS systems for finfish farming
- **BC Young Fishermen's Gathering:** \$10K is contributed for a business skill development workshop for young and new entrant fish harvesters.

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**Appendix A:** Efforts by the Government of British Columbia to support economic development in B.C.'s seafood sectors

- AFF has recently partnered with Innovate B.C. to develop B.C.'s first ever Aquaculture Innovation Challenge to encourage sustainable growth, competitiveness, and adaptability of the aquaculture sector in B.C. by funding innovations that solve challenges faced by aquaculture.
- In partnership with Genome British Columbia, we are supporting three research projects on the detection, potential early warning systems, and how outbreaks are handled will provide direct benefits to the public and oyster growers. The projects are being carried out in partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Vancouver Island University and the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association (BCSGA). Research is ongoing as COVID-19 lab requirements has delayed research.
- We are also working directly with the Coastal First Nations through a provincial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Part of the MOU is to establish a Northern Shellfish Aquaculture Development Strategy, to which AFF has provided funding for the initial Strategic Assessment.
- The federal government's decision, December 2020, to remove salmon farmed around the Discovery Islands will impact the sector and communities. To date, as a direct result, one company in Surrey, B.C. has had to close their processing facility which employed 80 people. We remain committed to ensuring that our federal counterparts will mitigate the impact of this decision on the dependent sectors. To support federal and provincial priorities of moving the sector to land-based recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), the government of B.C. is funding a RAS Business Case Study.
- Recent federal closure decisions including the Discovery Islands, along with salmon through the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, Area E crab, and potentially through marine planning in the Northern Shelf Bioregion, cumulatively are having a significant negative impact on seafood producers and communities in B.C. The government of B.C. will continue to seek mitigation of these impacts from the federal government.
- The government of B.C. is developing a Fisheries and Aquaculture Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Action Plan (OAH Action Plan) as part of Phase 1 of B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy. The OAH Action Plan will be informed by provincially funded multi-stakeholder workshops.
- The Government of B.C. has supported innovation in seafood processing through investment of up to \$1.3 million for establishing two Regional Food Processing and Innovation Hubs ("Food Hubs"), The Dock+ in Port Alberni and the Centre for Seafood

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Innovation (CSI) in Bowser on Vancouver Island that are part of the BC Food Hub Network. Services provided by these hubs benefit the seafood sector.

- The government of B.C. supports new entrant and young harvesters through funding the annual BC Young Fishermen's Gathering. The annual Gathering is an opportunity for knowledge transfer, business development skills, and succession planning for B.C.'s commercial fishing sector.
- The government of B.C. supports emerging sectors/products like seaweed. B.C. funded Seaweed Days, a seven-day event that included workshops, presentations, and demonstrations to educate and expand consumer interest.
- The government of B.C. provided funds to research institutions for continuity and further development in the seafood sector. Vancouver Island University (VIU) received funding for two projects to support aquaculture development in BC. VIU received \$30K to develop a strategic plan for finfish held at VIU as a teaching resource. Further, VIU received \$98K to develop a scallop broodstock colony/seed bank and genetic selection-based broodstock program to increase security for local growers.
- The Buy BC Partnership Program includes a Buy BC logo licensing component and provides cost-shared funding for B.C. seafood companies to undertake sector/product specific Buy BC marketing activities within B.C. There were 5 seafood projects funded by the Buy BC Partnership Program in the 2021/2022 fiscal year. These projects funded farmed salmon, farmed shellfish, halibut, prawns and a local community supported fishery.
- In January 2021, AFF signed an MOU with Innovate B.C. to support the Aquaculture Innovation Challenge Program. Innovate B.C. is a B.C. Crown agency that helps innovators access funding, launch their ideas, and connect with experts they need to build great companies. \$325K in monetary prizes (2x \$150K and 1x \$25K) were granted. A panel of judges comprised of industry experts, investors, potential customers, and government reviewed applications and select the two grand prize winners. The pitches took place on May 5, 2021, recipients were selected by the panel of judges, and projects are ongoing.
- In 2020, B.C. and Coastal First Nations (CFN) signed an MOU to build upon the success of the Reconciliation Agreement, natural resource management, the coastal economy, and preparation for climate change. One of the processes identified in the MOU is the development for a plan for Northern B.C. Shellfish Aquaculture Development Initiative and AFF provided \$150K to CFN for the development of a Strategic Assessment report. The Strategic Assessment is Phase 1 of the Northern BC Shellfish Aquaculture Development Initiative and was completed in summer 2021. B.C. and CFN will continue working through the MOU in 2022 towards a Northern Shellfish Aquaculture Development Strategy using the information provided by the Strategic Assessment.
- **Discovery Islands:** On September 28, 2020, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) responded

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to Cohen Commission's Recommendation #19 by announcing the completion of nine peer-reviewed risk assessments. All nine assessments found that the transfer of pathogens posed minimal risk to the abundance and diversity of migrating Fraser River sockeye salmon in the Discovery Islands area, allowing DFO to continue to issue licenses for the area. After consultations with First Nations in December 2020, and in response to the Cohen response, Minister Bernadette Jordan announced that DFO would phase out salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands by June 2022, with the stipulations that no new fish be introduced into the facilities during this time and that all farms be fish free by June 30, 2022. This will affect approximately 26 percent of B.C. farmed salmon capacity, representing 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019). Currently, four operators of the area have filed a judicial review to the Federal Court of Canada in Vancouver asking the courts to find the decisions made by Minister Bernadette Jordan as unreasonable. DFO has provided the Province tables of the relevant sites and their proportional production. Briefly, the area represents 32 percent of current B.C. farmed biomass and represents approximately 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019). One company in Surrey, B.C. has had to close their processing facility which employed 80 people. AFF remains committed to ensuring that our federal counterparts will mitigate the impact of this decision on the dependent sectors.

**Appendix B:** Further detail on Provincial/Federal cost share programming for B.C.'s seafood sector

- **Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program (FACTAP):** FACTAP supports Canada's fisheries and aquaculture industries to incorporate existing clean technologies into their day-to-day operations. The program was renewed for two more years (2021-2023) and will provide up to \$10M in federal dollars to be distributed nationally over two years. Total project costs are shared between the federal government (75 percent maximum) and proponents (25 percent minimum) with an option for provincial contribution. In the first year of the new FACTAP, the province will spend \$80K to support \$3.3 million total project costs for fisheries, aquaculture, and seafood processing
- **Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF):** The federally managed fund, announced in December 2018, is cost-shared with the federal, provincial, and territorial governments (90 percent: 70 percent federal, 30 percent provincial/territorial) and proponents (10 percent) to promote market access and development for the fish and seafood industry for initiatives that are national in scope. The \$43M national program will support the fish and seafood sectors by encouraging industry collaboration to promote high quality products. The program runs until March 31, 2024. To date, B.C. has funded 5 projects involving B.C. producers, contributing \$55.7K to support \$511.5K in total project costs with an additional national project targeting domestic market access initiatives starting work in the 2022/23 fiscal year.
- **B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF):** Announced on November 30, 2018, this federally managed fund is cost-shared with the province (70 percent federal and 30 percent provincial) to support innovation, infrastructure and science partnerships that will help protect and restore priority wild B.C. fish stocks, including Pacific salmon and steelhead, as well as ensuring the fish and seafood sector in British Columbia is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability. The fund is valued at \$143M over five years (provincial contribution of \$42.9M, plus an additional \$5M one-time matching grant to the Pacific Salmon Foundation in 2018/19 = 30% funds contributed by the Province). To date, a total of 60 contribution agreements have been signed (\$85M), with over 20 additional projects in various stages of negotiation. Fisheries and Oceans Canada and B.C. have committed to doubling their investment in BCSRIF.
- **Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program:** The BC Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program provides federal and provincial government cost-shared funding to B.C. seafood

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companies to support market development planning and activities, skills training and promotional tools. There were no successful seafood applicants in the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

- **Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), B.C. Traceability Adoptions and Traceability Value Chain Programs:** The Traceability Adoption (TA) program provides cost-shared funding to seafood harvesters, producers, and processors to implement or improve facility-based traceability systems and practices. The Traceability Value Chain (TVC) program offers financial assistance to agriculture food and seafood industry associations and groups of two or more agriculture food and seafood businesses along a value chain to put sector-wide or value chain traceability systems and technologies in place.

## **Funding for BC Seats at Western College of Veterinary Medicine**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The College of Veterinarians of B.C. (CVBC) and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association-Society of British Columbia Veterinarians (CVMA-SBCV) have emphasized ongoing shortage of veterinarians in B.C. for several years. Veterinary shortages are widespread across Canada.
- AEST developed a “Future Workforce Readiness Framework” to guide investments in post-secondary education and training to ensure people can adapt and respond to the needs of a cleaner, more sustainable economy.
- Additional seats are only part of the overall strategy to reduce veterinary shortages. CVBC and CVMA/SBCV are exploring other recommended options in the Sector Labour Market Partnership (SLMP) report and AFF is exploring ways to support those options, in cooperation with AEST, as part of the development of an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy.
- There is the potential for AFF to continue work with stakeholders (i.e., AEST, CVBC, CVMA/SBCV etc.) to ensure veterinary needs in agriculture are met, long-term.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- CVMA-SBCV undertook a labour market study through the Sector Labour Market Partnership (SLMP) program administered by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) to determine the extent of the problem.
- The SLMP report was published in May 2019 and revealed significant current and projected shortages of veterinarians across B.C. and across all types of practice and regions. The report concluded that BC was short 100 veterinarians per year for each of the next 5 years (cumulative total of 500 short).
- The top recommendation from the SLMP report was to secure 20 additional seats at the Western College of Veterinarian Medicine (WCVM), expanding on B.C.’s current allotment of 20 seats, with increased equity seats for qualified Indigenous B.C. students.
- CVBC and CVMA-SBCV have recently undertaken other recommendations in the labour market study (i.e.: facilitated recognition of foreign credentials, updates to bylaws for certified veterinary technicians) and are requesting that the Province follow through on funding additional seats to increase capacity.
- Alberta recently vacated their 20 seats at the WCVM after opening their own veterinary college in Calgary (at cost of \$400M). This means that 20 seats are currently available for occupation; other provinces have indicated that they do not have funding to capitalize on this opportunity.
- Currently B.C. is receiving more graduates from the Western College of Veterinarian Medicine (WCVM) than what is being paid for (due to factors such as the province being a desirable place to live/work). While B.C. is benefitting from this influx, there is no assurance that this approach will continue to shore up B.C.’s veterinary shortage.

- AFF is responsible for the regulation of veterinary medicine in the province, including vet technicians, and for the agricultural sector. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) supports by facilitating the provision of related post-secondary education, including funding for the WCVM.
- AEST was invited to Treasury Board (TB) as part of Budget 2022 and received approval to develop the Framework, which will include a funding request for the 20 additional seats at WCVM (in partnership with AFF).
- AFF is developing and will seek Cabinet endorsement for an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy which will include the support of complimentary initiatives underway to address the veterinarian shortage and support employment in rural areas/production livestock.
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is adding veterinarians as a priority occupation under the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants Program effective April 1, 2022. This program provides services to help immigrants find skilled employment in B.C. that uses the education and experience they bring to Canada. Foreign credentialing is also part of the broader credential recognition proposal that will go before cabinet in March 2022.

#### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- According to the SLMP report, B.C. currently has 20 seats at WCVM for 5M residents; Saskatchewan has 20 seats for 1.2M residents; Manitoba has 15 seats for 1.4M residents; and Alberta has 50 seats at their new college for 4.4M residents.

#### **PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The funding request for an increased intake of 20 students annually is broken down as follows:
  - \$2.14M in on-going provincial funding in 2022/23;
  - \$4.31M in 2023/24; \$6.53M in 2024/25; and,
  - \$8.80M in 2025/26 (final year is beyond the 3-year fiscal plan).
- The first cohort of 40 seats (the current allotment of 20 plus the increased intake of 20) would begin in September 2022. The first full cohort of 40 vets would graduate in 2026.
- B.C.'s cumulative investment in the WCVM from 2025/26 and onwards would be approximately \$16.6M for 40 seats; MOUs are renegotiated every five years (most recently negotiated effective May 2020 for the term 2020/21 to 2024/25).

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## **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Animal Welfare Overview**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- Our government is committed to animal welfare and fully respects the rights of people to peacefully protest.
- Recent events at beef and dairy farms have been very disappointing. The B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (B.C. SPCA) is investigating these incidents.
- The ministry is monitoring the situation and will take action to ensure animal welfare outcomes in this province are ensured.
- At the same time, without exception, we expect everyone to follow the law.
- We are hearing more about protestors undertaking extreme actions such as trespassing, sabotaging farm equipment, and posting images of farmers' children and threats of violence on social media.
- Most of these actions are illegal as well as being offside with how we must conduct ourselves and treat each other in a civilized society.
- Farmers, ranchers, and food processors in B.C. must be able to conduct their work free of harassment and intimidation.
- The Ministry has met with B.C. farmers to hear their concerns and is working on developing resources to help support farmers prepare for illegal trespassers.
- Anyone with concerns about the welfare of specific animals is asked to call the B.C. SPCA directly as they are mandated by our government under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCAA) to respond to animals in distress.
- The PCAA has among the strongest penalties in Canada for causing distress to an animal, up to \$75,000 and 24 months in prison.
- Action can be taken against anyone who causes distress to an animal in British Columbia.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### Compliance and Enforcement of Animal Welfare under the PCAA

- The Ministry has been facing increasing public pressure to enhance animal welfare for farm animals.

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- In October 2021, a dairy farm had its license suspended by the B.C. Milk Marketing Board due to evidence of animal cruelty on the farm and the B.C. SPCA initiated an animal cruelty investigation of the farm.
- In January 2022, over 200 beef cattle were seized by the B.C. SPCA from a farm on Vancouver Island and the B.C. SPCA initiated an animal cruelty investigation of this farm.
- These incidents have renewed calls for greater animal welfare oversight of farmed animals.
- The B.C. SPCA has begun to proactively inspect 12 farms as part of a pilot project to ensure compliance with the National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice, and confirm that animal cruelty is not occurring on the farms.
- The B.C. SPCA has advised that it does not have the capacity to inspect a broader number of farms to proactively ensure animal welfare. Government does not provide the B.C. SPCA with operational funding and the B.C. SPCA must rely on public donations to undertake its responsibilities under the PCAA.
- The recent high-profile incident of animal cruelty on a BC dairy farm has highlighted the challenges of using a non-profit society (i.e., the B.C. SPCA) with no operational funding from government as the compliance and enforcement body for animal welfare in BC.
- Farmers' and ranchers' confidence in B.C. SPCA's ability to conduct its compliance and enforcement of farmed animal welfare without bias is diminished due to B.C. SPCA's animal activism and fundraising activities that highlight incidences of animal cruelty.

Animal Activism and Amendments to the AHA

- Some farms, transporters, processors, and retailers have been the subject of aggressive action from extreme animal activists.
  - E.g., highly publicized protest at an Abbotsford hog farm in April 2019
  - E.g., subsequent activism attack on Johnston's meat processing facility in Chilliwack
- The Ministry has been subject to extreme animal activism.
  - On September 14, 2021, a forged news release was sent to multiple media outlets, claiming that AFF was announcing a ban on mink farming with a five-month transition period.
  - On September 29, 2021, activists targeted a regenerative agriculture conference that the minister was presenting at. The activists spammed the chat with messages about banning fur farming and used the white board feature on Zoom to write on the screen.

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- Following the 2019 protest, in October 2019, the minister made a statement with B.C.'s Attorney and Solicitor Generals in support of B.C. farmers and ranchers, denouncing extreme animal activism activities.
- In October 2019, AFF staff also organized and led a B.C. Animal Activism Roundtable with representatives from the farmed animal sectors, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to identify concerns. AFF held additional discussions in 2020.
- Ministry staff have worked to complete policy analysis on the issue and developed a potential approach to address extreme animal activism. On Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Extreme animal activism is currently managed legislatively in B.C. through the provincial Trespass Act (TA) and the federal Criminal Code. The maximum penalty on conviction under the TA is \$2,000 or imprisonment up to 6 months. Fines issued for trespass in B.C. are a set single amount of \$115.
- Although provincial trespass laws are not always directly comparable, B.C.'s fine amount of \$115 is low compared to other provinces.
- Since 2019, the provinces of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec have all made legislative changes in response to extreme animal activism. Other provinces are also in the process of exploring options.
- Common legislative requirements among these provinces' changes include:
  - Police empowerment to enforce;
  - Increased trespass fines;
  - Enhanced protection of farmed animals;
  - Prevention against disruption of and/or interference with farmed animal supply; and
  - Fines and cost recovery mechanisms related to property damage and disease transmission.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- A review of the PCAA's compliance and enforcement framework will be complex and result in potentially significant budget implications to government. Scoping work on this project has only just begun.

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- Animal rights activists have previously challenged new laws impacting extreme animal activism in Ontario for Charter concerns. Any law introduced in B.C. may face similar pushback.

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## One Welfare Overview

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- “One Welfare” as defined by the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council (NFAHW), which has recently been renamed as Animal Health Canada. It is stated as “a way to recognize the many social interconnections between human welfare, animal welfare and the integrity of the environment”.
- Animal welfare is a priority in British Columbia, and One Welfare builds on the existing animal protection framework and acknowledges the interrelationships between animal welfare and human mental health.
- Though much of the work on One Welfare has been paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries (AFF) staff have been working with stakeholders to identify and enhance the existing animal welfare framework and to continue to address the well-being of farmers and ranchers, animal care-givers, and service personnel who play an important role in the interactions between animals, people, and their environment.
- The recent floods and fires of 2021, as well of the COVID-19 pandemic, have highlighted the many overlaps between farmer mental health and animal welfare. There is potential for a One Welfare strategic approach to help address these issues.
- In order to support the mental health needs of agricultural producers impacted by the fall 2021 Atmospheric River event the ministry’s emergency response team worked with Ag Safe, Farm Management Canada, and other organizations to develop and provide a variety of mental health supports and resources to assist agricultural producers.

### BACKGROUND:

- Copyright

(<https://www.ahwcouncil.ca/work-areas/one-welfare>)

- In November 2018, the NFAHW Council hosted a consultation to develop recommendations for a national program to help the agriculture community cope with mental health issues, and to raise awareness of the benefits of involving medical and social services both proactively and in response to human and animal health and welfare situations.
- The NFAHW consultation explored the concept of a national program that would focus on prevention, build resilience, and respond not only to the impact of daily stressors on the farm, but also to critical incidents such as disease outbreaks and disaster.
- The recent floods in B.C. resulting from atmospheric rivers introduced significant animal welfare challenges, both due to extreme loss of life for farm animals and the challenges

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associated with relocating live animals, and the subsequent farmer mental health challenges. Examples of such challenges are cases in which many farmers were forced to euthanize their suffering animals during their evacuations.

- In February 2020, ministry staff held three presentations for stakeholders, including representatives from the livestock and poultry industries; first responders; B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA); veterinarians; regional health; and policy and regulatory staff from several provincial ministries (Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Mental Health and Addictions).
- The presentations provided stakeholders with information, created collaborative dialogue, explored needs related to One Welfare, and determined how to incorporate the concept of One Welfare into ministry work.
- In the summer of 2020, a co-op student was hired to conduct an evidence-based review on mental health programs that show a degree of success in supporting farmer mental health. The paper has been reviewed by AgSafe and AFF staff, who will then work cooperatively to determine next steps (i.e., potential program development).
- AFF staff, in cooperation with AgSafe, have used the paper as the basis for program cost analysis and feasibility assessment for a cooperative farmer mental health strategy going forward.
- AgSafe is leading/supporting programs to provide mental health services to the agriculture sector. A program to support veterinarians is taking place on February 23, 2022.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In 2016, Manitoba Agriculture co-hosted the inaugural International One Welfare Conference in Winnipeg. The conference provided national and international experts an opportunity to learn and collaborate on human and animal welfare concepts including those related to animal hoarding, on-farm animal welfare, and the links between animal and family abuse.
- There are now several One Welfare initiatives in Canada including a Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCV) partnership to provide social worker services to students and clients of the teaching hospital and farm services.
- The University of Calgary has developed a no-cost clinic for disadvantaged pet owners that has the dual benefit of helping the owners and their animals, and aids in teaching students One Welfare concepts.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) funding was provided (\$13,000) to host the One Welfare series of presentations in February 2020.
- CAP funding (\$14,500) was provided to work with AgSafe and a University of British Columbia (UBC) practicum student on a research project entitled "Informing the Development of a Producer Mental Health Framework for B.C".
- Due to recent floods, approximately \$1.1 million dollars was invoiced on animal relocation

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costs. This included providing safe housing for displaced animals on “buddy” farms, the transportation to those farms and the cost of feed.

- Note: This is not counting other costs such as the cost to farmer businesses of animal mortality, or non-computable farmer mental health costs.

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## One Health

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- One Health is the multidisciplinary collaboration to address the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) and the Provincial Government have a strong record of embracing the One Health approach over the last two decades.
- The scope of the Ministry's One Health work includes: antimicrobial use and resistance, food safety, and zoonotic disease management such as the infection of mink farms with SARS-CoV-2.

### BACKGROUND:

- One Health is a decades old concept that has gained prominence in recent years.
- One Health includes issues such as antimicrobial use and resistance, zoonotic diseases such as Covid and influenza, and food safety.
- BC was an early adopter of One Health as exemplified by the 2003-2009 Animal Determinants of Emerging Infectious Disease research project led by Dr. Craig Stephen at the Centre for Coastal Health with participants from the Ministry, BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), UBC, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and other organizations.
- In 2004, BC established a public health veterinarian (PHV) position, the first province to do so. BCCDC followed suit in 2005.
- One Health and the interdisciplinary collaboration inherent in the concept are fundamental to the role of a PHV.
- The close working relationship of the Ministry and BCCDC's PHVs has been important in sustaining the Province's One Health efforts.
- The inter-disciplinary efforts of other Ministry staff, such as those involved in animal health, inspection, and food safety, strongly support One Health efforts.
- The Ministry's current One Health initiatives include:
  - Annual One Health and Zoonoses Symposium
  - BC Integrated Surveillance of Foodborne Pathogens (BCISFP)
  - Annual publishing of BC animal antimicrobial use data. BC is the only province to publish such data.
  - Since 2015, reporting to BC Public Health the diagnoses of 15 named zoonotic diseases of animals.
  - The Ministry participates in the development of the Pan-Canadian Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.
  - As of August 2020, the Ministry participates in the FPT COVID-19 One Health Working Group.

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- In October 2020, the Ministry proactively initiated development of a SARS-CoV-2 strategy for the BC mink industry with Fraser Health Authority, BCCDC, WorkSafe BC, FLNRORD and AgSafe. With detection of the first infected mink farm in December 2020, this One Health group transitioned into managing the outbreak.
- Proposed One Health initiatives
  - Tick-borne diseases and climate change: a Western Canada One Health network (TCC-West). The proposed project is a One Health approach to strengthen Western Canada's capacity to predict, detect and respond to impacts of climate change on tick-borne diseases.
  - BC One Health Genomics Centre: the Ministry in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment are developing a business case for a BC One Health Genomics Centre.
  - May 2023, Western Canada Antimicrobial Stewardship Conference with focus on the environment, animal, and human health. Organizers include the BC Society of Veterinarians, the Ministry and BC Public Health. This is a biennial conference previously hosted by Saskatchewan and Alberta.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- N/A

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C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

## **PROVINCIAL IMPACTS OF FEDERAL FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE DECISIONS**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **In recent years, the federal government through Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has announced multiple reductions and closures in various B.C. fisheries and aquaculture sectors that are having cumulative impacts on many of B.C.'s coastal communities which rely on these opportunities.**
- **B.C. respects the federal government's position and their authority over licensing marine fisheries, salmon fisheries and aquaculture. However, the Province is requesting that DFO provide a coordinated strategic approach to mitigate the compounding impacts on B.C. fishing communities.**
- **We recognize the importance of finding ways to mitigate the cumulative impacts to our interconnected fisheries, aquaculture and seafood businesses and the communities that rely on them.**
- **A lack of federal support to mitigate the impacts caused by these fisheries and aquaculture decisions puts pressure on provincial social supports and resources.**
- **We will continue to press the federal government to ensure they are bringing supports to affected industries, including the individuals and businesses that support our many coastal communities in B.C.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

In recent years DFO has announced multiple reductions and closures in various B.C. fisheries and aquaculture sectors (See appendices 1 through 5 for closure details) that are having cumulative impacts on many of B.C.'s coastal communities:

- December 17, 2020, DFO announced the phase out of salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands by June 2022. This affects approximately 26 percent of B.C. farmed salmon and 20 percent of B.C.'s aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019).
- During the 2019 federal election, DFO was mandated to create a plan to transition from open net-pen salmon farming in B.C. by 2025, which has caused high uncertainty in the future of farming Atlantic Salmon, B.C.'s largest agricultural commodity.
- June 29, 2021, DFO announced sweeping closures of nearly 60 percent of the province's commercial salmon fisheries in areas with significant stocks of conservation concern, as well as a commercial licence retirement program yet to be unveiled.
- December 16, 2021, DFO announced major reductions in B.C. herring fisheries by reducing the Strait of Georgia fishery by half and closing any other commercial fishing opportunities along the coast.

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- April 19, 2021, the British Columbia Court of Appeal (BCCA) released a decision regarding access to crab for the Five Nations. DFO's response was to provide the Five Nations with 50 percent of the crab allocation in Area E which will result in the 33 commercial crab license holders having 50 percent less access by April 1, 2022.
- The federal government is working on a draft Network Action Plan (NAP) and implementation of a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Northern Shelf Bioregion (NSB). The current proposed draft NAP is causing concern for many fisheries operations that would see large portions of resource access removed.

Advice/Recommendations

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- There have been no federal announcements restricting salmon farming on the East Coast of Canada, which is impacting investment in the sector in B.C.
- B.C. is seeing a higher proportion of Marine Protected Areas than on the East Coast of Canada in the overall Canadian Marine Protected Area goals.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- No direct program expenses

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**Appendix 1: Wild salmon fishery closures**

Many Pacific salmon stocks have suffered significant declines in recent years along with the Big Bar Land Slide and more recently with the catastrophic flooding events, leading to large reductions in harvest and fishing opportunities. Decisions on salmon harvest, management, and hatchery marking practices in B.C. are managed entirely by DFO and the Province has jurisdiction over elements that may impact these practices but does not have jurisdiction over what methods of fisheries management DFO uses. On June 29, 2021, DFO announced a suite of significant closures of commercial fisheries that had not been included in the draft Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP). These were initiated under the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) as part of its harvest transformation pillar. The PSSI announcement included an additional 14 planned First Nations fisheries closures, resulting in 79 of 138 seine, gillnet, and troll salmon fisheries being closed across the coast. The closures focus on fisheries that have potential to, or are likely to, interact with stocks of concern and will have the greatest impact on fisheries using gillnet gear.

In 2019, 2020 and 2021, salmon catches were at record lows in B.C. as well as across most of the Pacific Northwest. Prior to the decline in stock and closures, processing of salmon typically created about 1,400 seafood processing jobs in B.C., or 29 percent of the total. There are 144 processing plants that process salmon out of the 269 licensed seafood plants in B.C.

**Appendix 2: Open net pen salmon farming phase outs**

In December 2020, the DFO Minister announced a phase out of all salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands (DI) by June 2022. This affects approximately 26 percent of B.C. farmed salmon capacity representing 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019). For more detailed information on the phase out of salmon farms in the Discovery Islands, see Estimates note: Discovery Islands/Aquaculture note.

Concurrently, Justin Trudeau stated as part of the 2019 federal election that he would create a plan to transition from all open net-pen salmon farming in B.C. by 2025. This was followed by DFO minister comments that they will be working to complete a plan by 2025 and not be aiming to have all farms removed by that time. These political statements and lack of clarity around DFO's plan, along with current land-based salmon farming options being unfeasible for industry, have caused high uncertainty in the future of B.C. salmon farming industry. This uncertainty threatens job security and brings a downturn in industry investment.

**Appendix 3: Herring fishery reductions and closures**

In June 2021, The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) sent a letter to DFO Minister Jordan outlining that the Province would like to see clearer objectives for managing herring based on their importance to ecosystem processes. The letter encouraged DFO to ensure timely implementation of the work DFO is doing on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and that herring management is considered in conjunction with efforts on wild salmon recovery. The letter states support for collaboration with First Nations, industry and DFO in any work made towards these goals.

In December 2021, DFO announced a reduction to a 10% harvest rate for the SOG roe herring fishery (half of the standard 20%), and the closure of the limited remaining commercial SOK fisheries with catch limited to First Nations FSC fisheries. These changes have been met with frustration by the herring fishing industry as the decisions do not align with the science that DFO presented to the HIAB and IHHPC or the methods used in previous years to determine the harvest rate and TAC from that science. The DFO announcement states that the decision was in consideration of declining wild Pacific salmon, and the impacts of flooding and landslides on B.C. fish habitats.

**Appendix 4: Area E crab fishery access removed from commercial sector**

The B.C. Dungeness crab fishery is B.C.'s most financially valuable wild fishery, and one of B.C.'s most independent fisheries by having a higher rate of license holders participating in the fishery and more benefits directly flowing to adjacent coastal communities. Area E harvesters have proven landings of 1 - 2.5 million pounds on average.

On April 19, 2021, the British Columbia Court of Appeal (BCCA) released its decision in relation to the appeal brought forward by the Five Nuu-chah-nulth Nations of Ahousaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht (Five Nations). The BCCA decision resulted in DFO being obligated to reconsider what level of crab harvesting opportunity it must provide to accommodate the Five Nations' rights. DFO decided to provide 50 percent of crab trap allocations in the areas to the Five Nations to satisfy the court's rulings.

The Courts stated that an inability to mitigate for the commercial fleet is not a justifiable reason to delay providing the Five Nations with access. As a result, by April 1, 2022, the commercial trap limits within Area E will be reduced by 50 percent and the commercial harvesters will be forced to divide up this reduced trap limit between its 33 licence holders, who will each receive half of the traps they are accustomed to. With high running costs and half of the access to product, most of these small businesses have expressed the inability to continue this season. DFO has expressed that it intends to mitigate and provide license buybacks but that it cannot happen in time for the 2022 fishery, leaving the commercial fleet without options.

**Appendix 5: Proposed Marine Protected Area impacts**

The draft Network Action Plan (NAP) has been collaboratively developed through a trilateral partnership between the governments of Canada, B.C., and 17 First Nations. FLNR Coast Area staff have been leading the Province's involvement in this initiative, with AFF and ENV participating in joint technical tables and contributing to product development. This process has been ongoing for almost a decade, with significant investment of provincial staff time and resources.

The NAP process includes creation of design 'scenarios', evaluated using ecological, cultural, and socio-economic performance measures and stakeholder feedback, and then revised to reflect input from a diversity of user groups. It provides a proposed MPA network design with recommendations for its implementation including governance, management, and monitoring. The draft NAP was released for First Nations, stakeholder, and public engagement in winter 2022 and a final NAP is expected by fall 2022. Public release of the draft NAP would also be accompanied by a socio-economic analysis, outlining potential implications of proposed conservation measures. Some costs to certain user groups are expected, including the commercial fishing sector, of which First Nations play a large role. Many fisheries will experience changes to harvest opportunities for some fisheries in certain locations. Current socioeconomic analysis An estimated indicates that 8.6% (\$26.3M landed value) of commercial fishing harvest in the NSB may be displaced, though this estimate does not account for potential redistribution of fishing effort and catch. Such a loss of commercial fishing value could lead to an additional \$17.9M impact to the seafood processing sector by 2030. Additionally, recreational fisheries expenditures would likely decrease between \$0.9M and \$2.8M annually, or between 0.5% and 1.5% of total NSB recreational fishing expenditures. The B.C. Seafood Alliance argues that the impacts could exceed \$125 million annually to the commercial fishing sector and would like to see a comprehensive transition plan with financial supports to offset any impacts to commercial fisheries.

## **CLIMATE RELATED IMPACTS ON THE BC SEAFOOD SECTOR**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **Commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors play an important part in B.C.'s food security and trade but are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including ocean acidification, oxygen deficiency (hypoxia), and ocean warming.**
- **Many of our seafood harvesters and farmers have had an incredibly difficult year due to impacts from wildfires, the heat dome, and the fall flooding.**
- **Impacts from flooding in B.C.'s rivers on the future of our salmon and steelhead stocks and habitat are not yet known.**
- **Recognizing the critical importance of fisheries in B.C., we are committed to the protection and revitalization of B.C.'s wild salmon populations as demonstrated by our ongoing development of a Wild Salmon Strategy & Action Plan (WSSAP). A corner stone of this work will be indigenous and federal partnerships, and a focus on climate resiliency.**
- **B.C is working collaboratively to better understand the impacts of climate change to the B.C. seafood sector, and to develop strategies to help deal with these.**
- **Through the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) we have funded several projects that research the effects of climate shifts on B.C.'s fish stocks.**
- **As part of Phase 1 of the B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptations Strategy (CPAS), the Fisheries and Aquaculture Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Action Plan (OAH Action Plan) will help foster resilient species and ecosystems.**
- **B.C. is also contributing to implementation of clean technologies in the fisheries, aquaculture, and seafood processing sectors through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program (FACTAP).**

### **BACKGROUND:**

- The changing climate affects life in the oceans and waterways, as droughts, fires, floods, rising seas, ocean acidification, hypoxia and warming oceans change the productivity of our waters and where fish live, spawn, and feed. Recent natural disasters highlight the urgency for addressing the impacts of climate change across all levels of government.
- For fisheries and aquaculture, the impacts are evident in freshwater, coastal nearshore and open ocean habitats. Some species like Pacific salmon rely on all of these.
- The 2021 heat dome on B.C.'s coast created localized impacts to shellfish growers and harvesters. The temperature caused the loss of approximately 700,000 farmed oysters and represented a loss of 52-93% for some growers. There is currently no business risk management funding available to this sector like there is in agricultural farming.
- The November 2021 atmospheric river flooding event impacted critical salmonid habitat on the Fraser River and severely damaged two land-based fish farms (one tilapia and one barramundi). The floods led to wash-out of the recently spawned salmon eggs and the 'scouring' of gravel beds necessary for salmon reproduction.

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- In 2019, B.C. completed a Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment as a part of B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS) to better understand climate-related risks and help B.C. develop appropriate measures to address those risks. This climate risk assessment identified ocean acidification as one of several priority climate risks for B.C.
- Phase 1 of CPAS, the BC Fisheries and Aquaculture Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Action Plan (BC OAH Action Plan) will help strengthen our foundational information and ultimately foster species and ecosystem resilience. Development of the BC OAH Action Plan is taking place in 2021 and 2022. The BC OAH Action Plan is consistent with the United Nations Ocean Decade initiative.
- Beyond the Wild Salmon Strategy and Action Plan, other related provincial strategies are in development, including the Coastal Marine Strategy and the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund. Provincial agencies are working to ensure strategy and engagement alignment.
- BCSRIF presents a funding opportunity to prioritize climate adaptation and mitigation for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in further intakes of this program.
- B.C. has supported the FACTAP which funds climate mitigation projects in the fisheries, aquaculture, and seafood processing sectors.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Like B.C., all jurisdictions that manage wild fisheries and aquaculture are experiencing the effects of high variability and uncertainty with fish returns, and extreme climate impacts.
- There has been significant investment and interest in the Pacific Northwest and globally to work together to better understand and plan to deal with the impacts of climate change.
- Washington State created a comprehensive Integrated Climate Response Strategy in 2012 which includes strategies for freshwater and marine systems
- Internationally, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is assessing science related to climate change.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION: SEE APPENDIX 1 FOR DETAILS**

- Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program FACTAP (\$80,000)
- Climate Preparedness Adaptation Strategy Phase 1 – Fisheries and Aquaculture Ocean Acidification Action Plan (OAH Action Plan) (\$155,000)
- Aquaculture Innovation Challenge (\$325,000)
- B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund BCSRIF (\$5,000,000) (\$16.55 total project costs)

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## Appendix 1

**DETAILED PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- **FACTAP:** For the 2021/22 fiscal, the province expended \$80K to support eight projects (four aquaculture, two fishing, and two processing projects) with total project costs of \$3.3M. Projects intend to mitigate climate change by reducing fuel consumption and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the fisheries, aquaculture, and seafood processing sectors.
- **Climate Preparedness Adaptation Strategy Phase 1 – Fisheries and Aquaculture Ocean Acidification Action Plan (OAH Action Plan):** \$155K is being allocated to several initiatives that will inform B.C.'s OAH Action Plan. To date, \$12.5K has been used to carry out four workshops focusing on various expert and stakeholder groups and the materials gleaned from the workshops will support the creation of B. C's OAH Action Plan. Further planned work includes ocean acidification data collection along the B.C. coast and a carbon footprint accounting methodology review for the commercial fishing sector.
- **BCSRIF:** BCSRIF is valued federally at \$143M over five years, including a \$5M grant to the Pacific Salmon Foundation Endowment Fund in 2018/19. The provincial contribution is \$42.85M over five years beginning in 2019/20, plus an additional matching \$5M one-time grant to the Pacific Salmon Foundation in 2018/19 (= 30% provincial contribution to projects). To date, BCSRIF has allocated \$16.55M (= \$5M provincial funds) towards climate monitoring, and climate adaptation and mitigation projects:
  - International pan-Pacific Salmon Expedition (2021): \$3M to the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission to conduct collaborative pan-Pacific winter and summer surveys to monitor abundance, and productivity of salmon to directly inform fisheries management decisions and enforcement efforts. The project will provide insight into how climate variability influences the distribution, migration, growth, and fitness of Pacific salmon.
  - Place-based risk of climate change to sustainability of BC wild and hatchery-origin salmon: \$1M to Pacific Impacts Consortium (University of Victoria) to conduct research that will improve understanding of potential threats posed to Pacific salmonids and their habitats posed by climate change and develop risk assessment tools to support adaptive regional management approaches
  - Winter salmon survey: \$650K to the Pacific Salmon Foundation to support international research in the Gulf of Alaska to study the abundance, health, and habitat use of Pacific salmonids during the winter. This will provide researchers with information to inform strategies to address ecosystem change under future climate conditions.
  - Climate Action Priorities for Salmon: \$3.3M to the Pacific Salmon Foundation to create a Climate Action Plan for BC salmon.
  - Enhancing estuary resiliency: An innovative approach to sustaining fish and fish habitat in a changing climate: \$8.6M to the Nature Trust of BC to undertake

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monitoring and research to assess estuary resilience to sea level rise and other climate impacts across the coast of BC

- **Aquaculture Innovation Challenge:** In January 2021, AFF signed an MOU with Innovate B.C. to support the Aquaculture Innovation Challenge Program. Innovate B.C. is a B.C. Crown agency that helps innovators access funding, launch their ideas, and connect with experts they need to build great companies. \$325K in monetary prizes (2x \$150K and 1x \$25K) were granted. A panel of judges comprised of industry experts, investors, potential customers, and government reviewed applications and select the two grand prize winners. The pitches took place on May 5, 2021, recipients were selected by the panel of judges. Projects are ongoing and include efforts to mitigate climate change through reduction in diesel fuel consumption in the aquaculture sector.

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**B.C. SALMON RESTORATION AND INNOVATION FUND****RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The protection of wild salmon is critically important to B.C.'s environment, history, economy and way of life.
- On March 15, 2019, the Province of British Columbia and the Federal Government announced a joint commitment of \$142.85 million dollars over the next five years to protect wild salmon.
- Our government's \$42.85 million investment in the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) was the largest provincial financial commitment to protect wild salmon in the past 20 years.
- We are committed to helping restore abundant wild salmon stocks, while we develop sustainable wild fisheries and support communities around B.C. and on our coast.
- The B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund is providing support for many wild salmon initiatives in B.C. with focus on high impact areas including:
  - Habitat protection and restoration for rivers and streams that are crucial for salmon reproduction;
  - Maintenance of healthy and diverse salmon populations; and,
  - Supporting lasting and meaningful reconciliation.
- These priorities align with the report from the B.C. Wild Salmon Advisory Council, the province's work with First Nations, industry, and the federal government; as well as our new Wild Salmon Strategy and Action Plan that is currently being developed by the Province.
- To date, over 90 projects have received support from BCSRIF totaling over \$126M of funding. The projects are very diverse in terms of location, scale, and proponent, but all contribute to protecting and restoring wild salmon stocks and creating a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.
- The program is also having significant co-benefits including over 450 people being employed through BCSRIF projects, over a 100 of which are in rural communities, and over 330 people being trained.
- Building on the program's success and continued need for such a funding mechanism, our government has made the commitment to work towards doubling BCSRIF to ensure strong, healthy wild salmon stocks are available for future generations of British Columbians.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Wild Salmon:** Wild Pacific salmon are of great social and economic importance to B.C., sustaining communities coast-wide and generating a wholesale value of \$235.8 million in 2018. Many Pacific salmon stocks have suffered disastrous declines leading to equivalent declines in the ecosystems and economies that rely on them.

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**Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC):** On June 15, 2018, B.C. launched the Wild Salmon Advisory Council (WSAC), a multi-stakeholder advisory council that contributed to the development of a strategy to support restoring healthy and abundant wild salmon stocks in B.C. The initial report from the WSAC formed the basis of public consultations and was followed by the release of the final report on March 8th, 2019, that outlined 13 recommendations.

**B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF):** In 2019 B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund was launched. This fund is a federal-provincial collaboration that helps to restore the habitat of our wild fish stocks in B.C. and protect our vulnerable wild Pacific salmon species. Canada is investing \$100 million over five years, and B.C. is investing \$42.85 million over five years.

AFF has a role in the administration of BCSRIF and the agreement identifies DFO as the implementing party for the fund. DFO is assigned activities including:

- financial administration of federal and provincial funding;
- project information collection and reporting;
- development and management of project funding agreements with proponents; and,
- secretariat for the associated federal-provincial committees.

AFF's role in BCSRIF is focused on:

- strategic oversight of the initiative, such as annual priority-setting, in partnership with DFO;
- cross-Ministry collaboration to represent provincial interests in BCSRIF;
- sector and industry engagement on provincial priorities and project concept development, in cooperation with DFO; and,
- collaboration with DFO in the adjudication of project applications.

To date, BCSRIF has funded over 90 projects from a wide range of applicants including: Indigenous groups, conservation groups, commercial organizations in the wild fisheries and industry sectors, recreational fisheries, as well as non-commercial organizations such as universities and academia, industry associations and research institutions. The fund supports projects that leverage local knowledge such as local Indigenous monitoring and guardianship programs and community-led habitat restoration, among other innovative projects aimed at protecting and restoring wild fish stocks.

BCSRIF had 192 submissions for its first in take of "Expression of Interest" (EOI) in 2019 requesting nearly \$300M in funding, and 126 EOI applications requesting \$197.1M in 2020, demonstrating the popularity of the fund. Working to doubling the size of BCSRIF is included in both Minister Popham and Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly's 2020 Mandate Letters. The Government of Canada has already committed an additional investment of \$100 million in the Federal Budget 2021 to expand the program. Announcements regarding 19 of the most recently funded projects are anticipated in Winter 2022.

DFO and AFF staff are currently reviewing the application process based on feedback received from applicants including during a series of roundtables held in Summer 2021 by Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly with support from Robert Chamberlin. Currently it is a two-stage joint review process involving DFO and provincial subject matter experts which has been praised for its professionalism but criticized for being arduous and lengthy.

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**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

All jurisdictions managing fisheries are experiencing challenges related to extreme environmental variability and uncertainty with respect to stock abundance.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

Implementation of WSAC recommendations and the B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy and Action Plan is expected to require funding to implement.

BCSRIF is valued federally at \$105M over five years, including a \$5M grant to the Pacific Salmon Foundation Endowment Fund in 2018/19. The provincial contribution is \$42.85M over five years beginning in 2019/20, plus an additional matching \$5M one-time grant to the Pacific Salmon Foundation in 2018/19.

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## AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES 2022 OUTLOOK

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The aquaculture and fisheries sectors provide thousands of jobs to British Columbians and sustain many Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- Continued demand for seafood globally, population growth, and climate change will likely increase the importance and value of fisheries and seafood to B.C. moving forward.
- However, increasing uncertainty related to access of the resource combined with some species on declining trends will challenge some of the B.C. seafood sector to maintain markets
- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were widespread throughout B.C.'s seafood producing and processing sectors and their markets in 2020-2021 and will continue in 2022.
- B.C.'s seafood sectors are facing increasing levels of uncertainty due to management decisions being made by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the agency responsible for marine fisheries management.

### Snapshot of 2022 Seafood Trends

| Species          | Harvest | Landed Value | Wholesale Value) |
|------------------|---------|--------------|------------------|
| Wild Salmon      | ↓       | ↓            | ↓                |
| Farmed Salmon    | ↓       | ↓            | ↓                |
| Herring          | ↓       | ↓            | ↓                |
| Halibut          | ↑       | ↑            | ↑                |
| Groundfish       | ↔       | ↔            | ↔                |
| Wild Shellfish   | ↔       | ↔            | ↑                |
| Farmed Shellfish | ↔       | ↔            | ↔                |
| Marine Plants    | ↑       | ↑            | ↑                |
| Other Species    | ↔       | ↔            | ↔                |
| Total B.C.       | ↔/↓     | ↔/↓          | ↔/↓              |

**BACKGROUND:**

British Columbia's (B.C.) extensive coastline and unique geography provide for a significant fisheries and seafood industry. In 2020, fisheries and aquaculture in B.C. harvested 272,000 MT of over 100 different species of fish, shellfish, and marine plants with a wholesale value of \$1.6B, which represents a 10 percent decrease in wholesale value from 2019. The aquaculture and fisheries sectors provide thousands of jobs to British Columbians and are specifically important to Indigenous and non-Indigenous rural coastal communities. Continued and increasing demand for seafood globally, population growth, and climate change will likely increase the importance and value of fisheries and seafood to B.C. moving forward.

**First Nations Considerations:**

First Nations have been participating in fisheries, including shellfish culture, since time immemorial and have been significant participants in B.C. commercial fisheries, primarily in the fishing fleet and as employees in the processing sector and more recently the aquaculture sector. Access to marine resources remains important for food, social and ceremonial fisheries, and economic development opportunities for First Nations communities.

One third of fish harvesting jobs are in First Nations communities. There is now growing Indigenous involvement in contemporary aquaculture, with 78 percent of B.C. salmon production in areas covered by partnerships with First Nations who hold approximately 20 percent of the jobs in B.C. associated with salmon farming. First Nations are also active participants in shellfish aquaculture with increasing interest in the emerging seaweed farming sector. Some First Nations have also established or acquired processing companies with mixed success. The recent Ahousaht decision, that grants a Constitutional right to sell fish for five Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nations, and other fisheries Indigenous Reconciliation initiatives, will likely change the current market and allocation formulas.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- All jurisdictions are still experiencing market changes and difficulties, especially related to supply chain disruptions, increased operating costs and labour shortages associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All jurisdictions that manage wild fisheries are experiencing the effects of high variability and uncertainty with fish returns and climate impacts. For example, while B.C. has been experiencing record low salmon returns, now Alaska and the Southern U.S. have also been reporting significant conservation concerns in 2021 and expected for 2022.
- There has been more significant investment recently in Atlantic Canada by large aquaculture companies due to more certainty in their industry.
- The global demand for seafood, from all sources, continues to rise due to global population growth, increase in wealth, especially in the middle classes in third world countries, and increased interest in the health benefits of from seafood.

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## Appendix – Species Details

**Aquaculture****1. Salmon and Finfish**

In 2020, farmed finfish contributed 34 percent of the production (100,000 MT) and 46.0 percent of the wholesale value (\$822M) of B.C. seafood in 2020. Within aquaculture, farmed salmon are the dominant species group representing 89.0 percent of the harvest (89,000 MT) and 96.0 percent of the wholesale value (\$710M) and is B.C.'s top agriculture food and seafood export commodity. The landed and wholesale value of farmed salmon in 2020 was \$635M and \$750M respectively. Compared to 2019, these values decreased by 5.0 percent and increased by 0.2 percent respectively. Most farmed salmon are Atlantic salmon, with modest amounts of chinook and minor amounts of coho, steelhead and Arctic char. Other finfish species producing minor volumes include sablefish, tilapia, and sturgeon.

The outlook for the B.C. farmed salmon sector is tenuous given past and recent policy developments, including the Discovery Island decision (see below), the removal of farms from the Broughton Archipelago (for further information see Estimate Note Title: *Broughton Recommendation and Implementation*), the Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's mandate commitment to review a "substantiable transition from open-net pen operations", and the Provincial moratorium (Order in Council 174) from 2008 prohibiting the disposition of crown land in tidal waters for finfish aquaculture on the North Coast. Additional issues that have resulted in stalled growth and investment of the salmon farming sector include uncertainty over perceived environmental impacts, allocation of Crown land tenures and First Nations' interests. Despite these challenges, the industry had committed to further investment in the sector, which is now uncertain with much investment (in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars) for salmon farming development in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

Additionally, two land-based farms (one tilapia and one barramundi) farms were severely damaged in the flooding events in the Fraser Valley, November 2021.

For a discussion on land-based/closed containment aquaculture – see the Estimate Note titled *Closed Containment Aquaculture* and the Note titled *Salmon Aquaculture Policy and Discovery Islands*.

**2. Shellfish**

In 2020, within aquaculture, farmed shellfish represented 7.0 percent of the harvest (6,670 MT) and 4.0 percent of the wholesale value (\$32.6M). The landed and wholesale value of cultured shellfish in 2020 were \$24.7M and \$32.6M, respectively, representing a 25 percent decrease and a 50 percent decrease, respectively, from 2019. The dominant farmed species is oysters, followed by modest production of clams, mussels, and scallops.

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Demand for B.C. shellfish typically far exceeds supply; however, growth of the industry is constrained. Furthermore, between 2017 and 2018, B.C.'s farmed shellfish declined by 10 percent in harvest volume and 20 percent in wholesale value. To address these issues, B.C. set innovation in the shellfish aquaculture industry as one of its priorities for the second intake of the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) which resulted in the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association (BCSGA) being awarded a \$3.5M sub-fund to provide to various smaller shellfish aquaculture projects in B.C.

- **Climate Change – Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia (OAH)**

The B.C. Preliminary Strategic Climate Risk Assessment for British Columbia identified ocean acidification as one of the highest ranked risks to the province due to the impacts on marine invertebrates and other marine organisms. Shellfish growers were one of the first sectors to document OAH impacts on the growth of larval oysters. However, much remains unknown on specific vulnerabilities, baseline data, and potential adaptation strategies. To address this concern, the minister is working with the Climate Action Secretariate and the Provincial Climate Preparedness Adaptation Strategy. The Ministry is proposing a one-year project to carry out a “B.C. fisheries and aquaculture needs assessment for climate risks and vulnerabilities.” In the summer of 2021, heat domes on the B.C. coast had significant localized impacts to shellfish growers. The increase in temperature caused the loss of approximately 700,000 oysters and represented a loss of 52-93% in some areas. Issues related to OAH will need to be addressed in the longer term to support the growth of the sector. There is ongoing work to develop a BC Fisheries & Aquaculture Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Plan through a series of multi-stakeholder workshops.

- **Shellfish Traceability**

DFO has reported a high volume of illegally harvested shellfish being laundered into regular market distribution channels, representing a serious public health risk. Plans to address this issue are underway, and DFO has updated the shellfish Conditions of License to assist in the enforcement of proper handling and traceability.

- **Marine Debris**

Marine debris from shellfish farming has caused a degree of public concern. To address this issue, the industry, through the BCSGA, is currently managing a large Styrofoam replacement initiative funded through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Program (FACTAP). The goal is to replace approximately 50 percent of the old expose Styrofoam currently being used in the industry. In addition, the BCSGA has just launched the Shellfish Farm Environment Plan (SHEP). SHEP is aimed at improving the environmental performance of the membership. Currently SHEP focusses on three key issues of concern: exposed

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foam floatation; non-seabed debris; and wildlife protection measures.

- **Shellfish Seed Stock**

Most of the shellfish seed stock used by the sector is imported from the U.S. and Chile, presenting not only an external liability should supply chains be disrupted (as seen with COVID-19) but also a potential source of genetic and foreign disease risks. Recent efforts to create more seed locally are easing the pressure on the oyster farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) is working with the shellfish industry on seed access issues through the previously established Ocean Acidification Shellfish Industry Seed Supply (OASISS) project and by facilitation the adoption of innovative hatchery technology through the FACTAP and B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF).

### **3. Marine Plants**

There is significant interest in the emerging sector of farmed marine plants. Several companies are investing in this sector however, there are regulatory challenges with approving marine tenure sights for future production.

### **Commercial Fisheries**

B.C.'s commercial fishing and seafood processing sectors are facing significant uncertainty regarding access. Currently, there are 11 marine planning processes on the B.C. coast at various stages of development and scale. Once implemented, these marine protected areas will significantly restrict access to marine resources and force harvesters to travel further to grounds or leave the industry. Climate change, ocean acidification and hypoxia are also contributing to uncertainty within the sector as species experience increased natural mortality.

Further, it is becoming increasingly common for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the management agency for fisheries in B.C. to make unexpected or delayed decisions without suitable mitigation strategies which are further described below. Finally, reconciliation objectives set by the governments of Canada and British Columbia provide a level of uncertainty in access and effort on the coast.

### **4. 'Other' Wild Shellfish**

B.C.'s 'other' wild shellfish fisheries include wild oysters, clams, gooseneck barnacles and swimming scallops. Oyster and clam fisheries are experiencing challenges with poaching and presence of European green crab. Further, First Nations on the Sunshine Coast are reporting high levels of recreational harvest from buses full of tourists coming to harvest clams in their territory. This is impacting their community's ability to harvest traditional foods.

These smaller fisheries face challenges funding their surveys, science, and monitoring as there are not many harvesters, industry is not organized, and this harvest typically takes place in

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remote areas without quick access to markets. Overall, most wild shellfish stock will likely remain at relative stable levels again for 2022. The impacts of changing environmental conditions, and in particular impacts from climate and ocean acidification, will increase uncertainty in forecast and harvest levels. Market conditions are expected to remain strong.

**5. Shrimp**

Since 2017, there has been a large decline in biomass which resulted in limited fishing opportunity and loss of markets. The fishery is further challenged with market access due to competition from the U.S. and Atlantic Canadian mechanically processed, cheaper products which are Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified. Shrimp biomass is correlated with ocean temperatures, so there will generally be low abundance two years after a warm water event. The 2021 shrimp fishery experienced low stock biomass in many management areas with additional limitations due to reaching the Eulachon bycatch limits on the west coast of Vancouver Island and closed areas. In 2020, shrimp landings were 4,300MT which was a 54 percent decrease from the 2019 landings. However, the 54 percent decrease in landings corresponded to only 17 percent decrease in wholesale value (\$13.29M). The 2021 fishery did not come close to fishing the entire TAC. The 2022 shrimp trawl fishery will face similar constraints with many area's stock biomass being in the critical and cautious zones. Indigenous communities on the North Coast are lobbying DFO for the introduction of eulachon bycatch limits for the North Coast which will impact fisheries in the area. The shrimp trawl industry is currently working with DFO and researchers at the University of British Columbia to improve stock assessment with the goal of opening more areas to shrimp trawling on the coast.

**6. Prawn**

This fishery landed 2,050MT, generating \$40.4M in wholesale value in 2020 which represents an increase of 3.3 percent and decrease on 33.4 percent respectively. The impact of COVID-19 on valuable international markets early in the pandemic contributed to loss overall value. However, many harvesters in the prawn sector turning to domestic markets, selling their prawns direct to consumers and taking home a greater portion of revenue for themselves. The outlook for 2022 is expected to be very similar to 2021. The issue raised by DFO in 2021 around the practice of tubbing prawn tails has been resolved and the practice will be allowed to continue. As a result, harvesters will be able to maintain and grow their share of the domestic market. Moving forward, DFO and industry will engage on standardizing packaging and traceability tagging.

**7. Crab**

The Dungeness crab fishery is one of the most socio-economically important fisheries on the coast. Fishing occurs coast-wide and has one of the highest participation rates, approximately 92 percent of licensed vessels are active. From 2019-2021, Dungeness landings were among some of the largest on record. North Coast fisheries (Areas A and B) account for most Dungeness crab landings. In 2021, the main markets in China and the U.S. continued to be

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impacted by COVID-19 however, industry experienced some of the highest prices in recent years. Dungeness crab biomass experienced regular fluctuations in fishable biomass and cannot be accurately forecasted into 2022.

Marine planning initiatives, like the Northern Shelf Bioregion, reconciliation processes, and illegal fishing are creating uncertainty and impeding success of the Dungeness fishery. Illegal fishing in all crab sectors has now spread coast-wide but is still largely concentrated on the South Coast.

The 2021/2022 American Dungeness crab fishery opened on time for the first time in several years and has seen significant landings to date. The American fishery's impact to crab inventories and B.C.'s crab fishery headed into the spring are unknown at this time. AFF is continuing to work with the sector to assist with these issues and with domestic marketing through the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund.

A recent B.C. Court of Appeal decision (April 2021) has required DFO to reallocate effort (i.e. traps) from Area E on the west coast of Vancouver Island to the Five Nations fishery. Industry was notified of this decision in December 2021 and at the time, DFO presented no viable mitigation for the commercial sector's loss of access. This change in access must be implemented in April 2022 and DFO and the commercial industry have not come to a viable solution for mitigating this loss of access. One emerging issue with the reallocation of traps is that within the Five Nations Integrated Fisheries Management Plan, there are no limits on vessel length or trap stacking that apply to the existing commercial fishery. There is potential for the Five Nations fishery to be able to out compete the remaining commercial fishery if they are operating with different effort conditions. AFF staff continue to follow the issue closely and encourage DFO to urgently find a solution.

## **8. Wild Pacific Salmon**

The overall outlook for most Pacific salmon stocks in 2022 will be very poor and like 2021, which was one of the lowest on record. Thompson and Chilcotin River steelhead populations have reached critical lows and are undergoing Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) reassessment. Several Fraser River bound salmon stocks and steelhead will undergo assessments for potential Federal *Species At Risk Act* (SARA) listing and are stocks of concern. In reaction to low returns, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) announced their \$641M Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) which included significant closures and plans for restructuring the fleet, as well as rebuilding plans. The Big Bar rockslide has impeded natural fish passage beyond it, further impacting several salmon species migration in the Fraser River. In 2021, most salmon were able to pass through the Big Bar site unobstructed.

Salmon returns will be highly variable, with an overall continued trend of reduced productivity, especially for southern salmon populations and chinook in all areas. A key factor is the poor

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conditions for ocean survival for the sea entry and freshwater rearing years for salmon stocks returning in 2021. However, this will be an Adams cycle year and there could be a relatively abundant return of Fraser sockeye (close to 10 million). This may result in more challenges as DFO balances conservation requirements, its new Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI), and demands for fisheries opportunities for all interests including the US, First Nations, and commercial and sport fishing sectors. There will be limited economic opportunities for all salmon fisheries in the next several years

- **Sockeye:** Sockeye returns are expected to remain below historical averages in both north and south coastal regions. A relatively large return of Summer and Late run Fraser sockeye is expected from this dominant group of Adams River stocks in 2022. There remains significant uncertainty with these runs. There will likely be very limited economic opportunities for salmon fishermen as a result.
- **Chinook:** Northern and southern populations of chinook salmon are expected to produce poor returns. Conservation efforts for stocks of concern and further plans for SRKW recovery efforts being considered by DFO may also further limit commercial and recreational harvest opportunities in 2022.
- **Pink:** 2022 is an even year and therefore not a 'pink year' (odd years see larger returns than even years). Fraser River pink returns are expected to be low. Some Central Coast pink runs could see better than average returns in 2022.
- **Coho:** Abundance will remain uncertain and depend on marine survival. Southern coho populations will mostly remain at historic lows for 2022. Harvest restrictions will likely continue. Northern coho populations are expected to be more variable but will likely show declines.
- **Chum:** Forecasts are highly uncertain. 2022 is not expected to be as productive as previous years. Poor chum returns are expected in northern systems while southern inside populations are expected to yield some fisheries opportunities, despite high stock variability and conservation concerns for other species.

## 9. Tuna

The USA-Canada Albacore Tuna Treaty fishing arrangement expired in 2019. A new 3-year roll-over arrangement was agreed to extending from 2020 to 2023 which provides some stability for B.C.'s tuna fishermen. The wholesale value of B.C. albacore tuna products was \$33.4M in 2020. Fish behaviour in 2021 had stocks in Canadian waters for longer, contributing to a productive season, with high catches of 'peanuts' (small albacore). Albacore tuna catches in 2021 were 2,420 MT in 2021, which is a 2 percent increase from 2020. Catch levels are expected to remain relatively stable for 2022. Tuna markets and prices remain strong.

## 10. Herring

In 2021, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) was set at approximately 18,000 MT (food, bait, special use and roe). The drop in TAC over the last few years in the Strait of Georgia (SOG) has impacted the commercial fishing industry as well as the seafood processing industry as roe herring is one of the only fisheries that sustains employment through winter months when most other fisheries are closed.

For 2022, DFO science presented several Management Procedures (MPs) with various harvest rates and probabilities of achieving conservation targets. All MPs for the SOG with a harvest rate (HR) of 20 percent or more met conservation objectives with significant probability and robustness. Herring stocks in SOG are predicted to be slightly less than 2021 but, still higher than the last 10-15 years. Industry supported a HR of 20% however, in December 2021, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, The Honourable Joyce Murray announced a decrease in harvest rate by half for the SOG roe herring fishery for 2022 in consideration of declining wild Pacific salmon stocks.

The 2022 TAC for roe herring in the SOG is 7,850MT. Further, there will be no commercial spawn on kelp (SOK) harvest opportunities coastwide. SOK harvesters also require a Provincial Wild Aquatic Plant Harvest Licence to harvest the kelp required for their SOK fishery and it costs \$110.00 per application with a cut off October 1<sup>st</sup>, meaning harvesters applied and paid before they knew there wouldn't be fishing opportunities.

Overall, the reduced TAC will present challenges for industry to maintain Japanese and Chinese markets, especially with the anticipation that Sitka's stocks are rebounding. There is growing public concern, and advocacy groups are calling for a complete moratorium on the herring fishery. There were no significant conflicts on the water for the 2021 season but, lack of protest may have been influenced by COVID-19. On the Central Coast, the Heiltsuk First Nation has worked with DFO to reach the decision to not allow a roe herring fishery despite the DFO science advice to allow harvest since 2019. Of the five main herring stocks that are managed in B.C., three of five appear to still be recovering from a low in 2010.

## 11. Groundfish

- **Hake:** While the 2021 data are not yet finalized, confirmed Canadian hake landings have decreased again from the record setting harvests in 2017-2019 due to lack of recruitment of juvenile hake into the fishery. In 2020 and 2021, the U.S. and Canada were unable to reach an agreement under the Pacific Hake Treaty. The U.S. was advocating for continued high catch levels, and Canada sought a reduction in catch given the long-term status of the stock. Hake stocks are dependent on large recruitment years that bring large harvestable masses of fish that can sustain both countries for years. Large recruitment years occurred in 2014 and 2017 and the stocks have been decreasing as these are aging out or being caught. The stock assessment data is now showing that there is potential for the 2020-year class to

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have strong recruitment which is promising for the stocks and may lead to easier treaty negotiations and the ability to reach agreement in 2022. This year's negotiations will occur at the end of March 2022.

- **Halibut:** Halibut stocks are well managed and see expected increases and decreases which inform total catch levels. For the 2022 season the surveys show an overall increase in abundance which will result in an increase to the coastwide TAC and Canada's TAC. Coastwide TACs, which have been stable up until 2017, were thought to be in decline, so the coastwide TAC was reduced significantly in 2018 down to 27.9M lbs. An agreement was reached with the U.S. at the 2019 International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) negotiation sessions, which gives provided B.C. a proportional share of 17.7% of the coastwide TAC halibut for four years. The 2022 coastwide TAC for Pacific halibut was set at 41.22M lbs. which provides Canada with 7.56M lbs. (up from 7 M lbs. in 2021). The commercial fishery remains very strong in recent years in B.C. as prices and consumer demand are high. With 2022 being the last year of the interim agreement which provides Canada a fixed share of the total stock, it is expected that 2023 will see more tense negotiations and the US pushing for Canada to receive a smaller share.
- **Other Groundfish:** Groundfish hook and line harvests may show a small decrease or remain stable in 2022 due to navigating area changes due to rockfish conservation concerns, mostly around yelloweye and bocaccio rockfish. Bocaccio rockfish has shown a historic recruitment event that expects to provide enough fish by the 2023 fishing season to satisfy DFO's rebuilding plan and ease pressure on the trawl fisheries. The groundfish trawl outlook is good, however, with similar conservation concerns for some rockfish, including bocaccio rockfish and Arrowtooth flounder. Opportunities for lingcod and other minor species should be like last year. Sablefish enter the final year of their harvest rate ramp down and DFO has recommended a TAC of 2,623MT which is a decrease of 264t from the 2021 season. Markets and prices remain strong, and harvest should remain stable through 2022.

## **AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The B.C. government has programs to help aquaculture, fisheries and seafood companies adopt and research new technology, reduce their environmental footprint, manage business risks, and market their products to consumers in B.C. and around the world.
- Many British Columbians enjoy fresh and local seafood farmed and caught in B.C. The B.C. government supports local producers and harvesters in reaching B.C. customers with the Buy BC campaign.
- The governments of Canada and B.C. are supporting B.C. seafood processors in reaching new customers and improving their sales with international market supports with the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF) and the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).
- B.C.'s seafood sectors continue to face challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic including supply chain disruption, increased operating costs, and labour shortages.
- Recent decisions by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to remove salmon farms, wild salmon closures, and reduce herring harvest are contrary to DFO produced science and are impeding economic opportunities for B.C.'s seafood sectors, including First Nations fisheries. The B.C. Government continues to work with DFO to ensure impacts of these decisions are appropriately mitigated.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- In 2020, B.C. fisheries and aquaculture harvested over 272,000 metric tonnes (MT) of 100 different species of fish, shellfish, and marine plants with a wholesale value of \$1.6B.
- Aquaculture contributed 37 percent of the production (100,000 MT) and 51 percent of the wholesale value (\$822M) of B.C. seafood. Key farmed species include Atlantic salmon, chinook salmon, oysters, mussels, and clams.
- Fisheries contributed 63 percent of production (172,000 MT) and 49 percent of the wholesale value (\$801M) of B.C. seafood. Key wild species include sockeye salmon, Dungeness crab, Pacific hake, Pacific halibut, geoduck, prawns, rockfish, and albacore tuna.

### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Nationally, there are approximately 24 federally administered programs that provide financial support for the fish and seafood sector. Of these, six are specific to certain provinces (Quebec) or regions (Atlantic Fisheries Fund; several Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) funds that are specific to the Atlantic Region). In addition,

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there are three funds specific to First Nations capacity building, including one that is specific to British Columbia. The remaining 15 funds support a range of activities from basic science research to innovation, marketing, and financing.

- Recently, Western Economic Diversification Canada was diversified to Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan) and Prairies Economic Development Canada. PacifiCan has several economic development loans programs that the B.C. seafood sector is eligible.
- Each province manages provincially funded programs in concert with the federal programs. The number of each program developed by each province ranges: Newfoundland (1); Nova Scotia (13); Prince Edward Island (9); New Brunswick (7), Quebec (10); Ontario (10), Manitoba (1); B.C. (3). These numbers include federal-provincial cost-shared programs.
- Similar to the federal programs, provincial programs support a range of activities but focus on financial assistance, market development, and labour and skill development.
- Of particular note, all provinces have funding programs for loans, loan guarantees or access to capital for business development. British Columbia does not have a program to provide access to capital for business development with the exception of the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI) Aquaculture Development Source fund for First Nations aquaculture business development (this excludes fisheries).

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- **FACTAP:** For the 2021/22 fiscal, the province expended \$80K to support eight projects (four aquaculture, two fishing, and two processing projects) with total project costs of \$3.3M.
- **CFSOF:** B.C.'s current allocation is \$80K for one project worth \$1.3M, is national in scope and focuses on domestic market access initiatives. This project will be completed in the 2022/23 fiscal year.
- **BCSRIF, Buy BC and CAP:** (B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program; B.C. Traceability Adoptions and Traceability Value Chain Programs) are currently outlined within program allocations.
- **RAS Business Study:** \$85K was allocated to undertake a business case study to understand the feasibility of RAS systems for finfish farming
- **BC Young Fishermen's Gathering:** \$10K is contributed for a business skill development workshop for young and new entrant fish harvesters.

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**Appendix A:** Efforts by the Government of British Columbia to support economic development in B.C.'s seafood sectors

- AFF has recently partnered with Innovate B.C. to develop B.C.'s first ever Aquaculture Innovation Challenge to encourage sustainable growth, competitiveness, and adaptability of the aquaculture sector in B.C. by funding innovations that solve challenges faced by aquaculture.
- In partnership with Genome British Columbia, we are supporting three research projects on the detection, potential early warning systems, and how outbreaks are handled will provide direct benefits to the public and oyster growers. The projects are being carried out in partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Vancouver Island University and the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association (BCSGA). Research is ongoing as COVID-19 lab requirements has delayed research.
- We are also working directly with the Coastal First Nations through a provincial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Part of the MOU is to establish a Northern Shellfish Aquaculture Development Strategy, to which AFF has provided funding for the initial Strategic Assessment.
- The federal government's decision, December 2020, to remove salmon farmed around the Discovery Islands will impact the sector and communities. To date, as a direct result, one company in Surrey, B.C. has had to close their processing facility which employed 80 people. We remain committed to ensuring that our federal counterparts will mitigate the impact of this decision on the dependent sectors. To support federal and provincial priorities of moving the sector to land-based recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), the government of B.C. is funding a RAS Business Case Study.
- Recent federal closure decisions including the Discovery Islands, along with salmon through the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, Area E crab, and potentially through marine planning in the Northern Shelf Bioregion, cumulatively are having a significant negative impact on seafood producers and communities in B.C. The government of B.C. will continue to seek mitigation of these impacts from the federal government.
- The government of B.C. is developing a Fisheries and Aquaculture Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Action Plan (OAH Action Plan) as part of Phase 1 of B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy. The OAH Action Plan will be informed by provincially funded multi-stakeholder workshops.
- The Government of B.C. has supported innovation in seafood processing through investment of up to \$1.3 million for establishing two Regional Food Processing and Innovation Hubs ("Food Hubs"), The Dock+ in Port Alberni and the Centre for Seafood

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Innovation (CSI) in Bowser on Vancouver Island that are part of the BC Food Hub Network. Services provided by these hubs benefit the seafood sector.

- The government of B.C. supports new entrant and young harvesters through funding the annual BC Young Fishermen's Gathering. The annual Gathering is an opportunity for knowledge transfer, business development skills, and succession planning for B.C.'s commercial fishing sector.
- The government of B.C. supports emerging sectors/products like seaweed. B.C. funded Seaweed Days, a seven-day event that included workshops, presentations, and demonstrations to educate and expand consumer interest.
- The government of B.C. provided funds to research institutions for continuity and further development in the seafood sector. Vancouver Island University (VIU) received funding for two projects to support aquaculture development in BC. VIU received \$30K to develop a strategic plan for finfish held at VIU as a teaching resource. Further, VIU received \$98K to develop a scallop broodstock colony/seed bank and genetic selection-based broodstock program to increase security for local growers.
- The Buy BC Partnership Program includes a Buy BC logo licensing component and provides cost-shared funding for B.C. seafood companies to undertake sector/product specific Buy BC marketing activities within B.C. There were 5 seafood projects funded by the Buy BC Partnership Program in the 2021/2022 fiscal year. These projects funded farmed salmon, farmed shellfish, halibut, prawns and a local community supported fishery.
- In January 2021, AFF signed an MOU with Innovate B.C. to support the Aquaculture Innovation Challenge Program. Innovate B.C. is a B.C. Crown agency that helps innovators access funding, launch their ideas, and connect with experts they need to build great companies. \$325K in monetary prizes (2x \$150K and 1x \$25K) were granted. A panel of judges comprised of industry experts, investors, potential customers, and government reviewed applications and select the two grand prize winners. The pitches took place on May 5, 2021, recipients were selected by the panel of judges, and projects are ongoing.
- In 2020, B.C. and Coastal First Nations (CFN) signed an MOU to build upon the success of the Reconciliation Agreement, natural resource management, the coastal economy, and preparation for climate change. One of the processes identified in the MOU is the development for a plan for Northern B.C. Shellfish Aquaculture Development Initiative and AFF provided \$150K to CFN for the development of a Strategic Assessment report. The Strategic Assessment is Phase 1 of the Northern BC Shellfish Aquaculture Development Initiative and was completed in summer 2021. B.C. and CFN will continue working through the MOU in 2022 towards a Northern Shellfish Aquaculture Development Strategy using the information provided by the Strategic Assessment.
- **Discovery Islands:** On September 28, 2020, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) responded

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to Cohen Commission's Recommendation #19 by announcing the completion of nine peer-reviewed risk assessments. All nine assessments found that the transfer of pathogens posed minimal risk to the abundance and diversity of migrating Fraser River sockeye salmon in the Discovery Islands area, allowing DFO to continue to issue licenses for the area. After consultations with First Nations in December 2020, and in response to the Cohen response, Minister Bernadette Jordan announced that DFO would phase out salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands by June 2022, with the stipulations that no new fish be introduced into the facilities during this time and that all farms be fish free by June 30, 2022. This will affect approximately 26 percent of B.C. farmed salmon capacity, representing 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019). Currently, four operators of the area have filed a judicial review to the Federal Court of Canada in Vancouver asking the courts to find the decisions made by Minister Bernadette Jordan as unreasonable. DFO has provided the Province tables of the relevant sites and their proportional production. Briefly, the area represents 32 percent of current B.C. farmed biomass and represents approximately 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019). One company in Surrey, B.C. has had to close their processing facility which employed 80 people. AFF remains committed to ensuring that our federal counterparts will mitigate the impact of this decision on the dependent sectors.

**Appendix B:** Further detail on Provincial/Federal cost share programming for B.C.'s seafood sector

- **Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program (FACTAP):** FACTAP supports Canada's fisheries and aquaculture industries to incorporate existing clean technologies into their day-to-day operations. The program was renewed for two more years (2021-2023) and will provide up to \$10M in federal dollars to be distributed nationally over two years. Total project costs are shared between the federal government (75 percent maximum) and proponents (25 percent minimum) with an option for provincial contribution. In the first year of the new FACTAP, the province will spend \$80K to support \$3.3 million total project costs for fisheries, aquaculture, and seafood processing
- **Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund (CFSOF):** The federally managed fund, announced in December 2018, is cost-shared with the federal, provincial, and territorial governments (90 percent: 70 percent federal, 30 percent provincial/territorial) and proponents (10 percent) to promote market access and development for the fish and seafood industry for initiatives that are national in scope. The \$43M national program will support the fish and seafood sectors by encouraging industry collaboration to promote high quality products. The program runs until March 31, 2024. To date, B.C. has funded 5 projects involving B.C. producers, contributing \$55.7K to support \$511.5K in total project costs with an additional national project targeting domestic market access initiatives starting work in the 2022/23 fiscal year.
- **B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF):** Announced on November 30, 2018, this federally managed fund is cost-shared with the province (70 percent federal and 30 percent provincial) to support innovation, infrastructure and science partnerships that will help protect and restore priority wild B.C. fish stocks, including Pacific salmon and steelhead, as well as ensuring the fish and seafood sector in British Columbia is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability. The fund is valued at \$143M over five years (provincial contribution of \$42.9M, plus an additional \$5M one-time matching grant to the Pacific Salmon Foundation in 2018/19 = 30% funds contributed by the Province). To date, a total of 60 contribution agreements have been signed (\$85M), with over 20 additional projects in various stages of negotiation. Fisheries and Oceans Canada and B.C. have committed to doubling their investment in BCSRIF.
- **Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program:** The BC Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program provides federal and provincial government cost-shared funding to B.C. seafood

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companies to support market development planning and activities, skills training and promotional tools. There were no successful seafood applicants in the 2021/2022 fiscal year.

- **Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), B.C. Traceability Adoptions and Traceability Value Chain Programs:** The Traceability Adoption (TA) program provides cost-shared funding to seafood harvesters, producers, and processors to implement or improve facility-based traceability systems and practices. The Traceability Value Chain (TVC) program offers financial assistance to agriculture food and seafood industry associations and groups of two or more agriculture food and seafood businesses along a value chain to put sector-wide or value chain traceability systems and technologies in place.

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## Wild Salmon Strategy & Action Plan

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- We have a renewed mandate to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon populations, which are critically important to B.C.'s environment, history, economy, and way of life.
- We are working closely with partners to develop a suite of strategies that address existing recommendations that will be directly beneficial to salmon in B.C.
- We are committed to helping restore abundant wild Pacific salmon stocks while developing sustainable fisheries and supporting communities around B.C.
- We are working across government to ensure that all of Governments work aligns with the goal of restoration wild salmon, and that this objective will be built into other strategies that B.C is undertaking.
- Currently, options for the strategy are being developed that build off the vast amount of work and recommendations from First Nations, stewardship groups and others. Further consultation will take place in coming months.
- We are also aware of the significant commitment from the federal government through their \$647M Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, and are expecting to work closely to ensure there is a coordinated strategy to recover wild salmon in partnership with First Nations in B.C.
- Since 2019, B.C. and the federal governments have been working together to protect wild salmon through the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund.
- This government has pledged to invest an additional \$42.85M in the B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, doubling the largest provincial financial commitment to protect wild salmon in the past 20 years.
- Most importantly, we will work to ensure strong and healthy wild salmon stocks are available for future generations of British Columbians.

### BACKGROUND:

- Minister Popham and Parliamentary Secretary Donnelly's November 2020 Mandate letters direct: "lead work with the federal government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon populations, including by working to double the size of the Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, building on past successes, and supporting innovation in fish hatcheries, and ensuring B.C. processing of B.C.-caught fish".
- Options for a Wild Salmon Strategy and Action Plan (WSSAP) are under discussion with the First Nations Fisheries Council, Pacific Salmon Foundation and DFO.

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- Options focus on areas of provincial jurisdiction (land and water management) with the main policy focus being a 'salmon lens' and the main program focus being BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund.
- The salmon lens is a policy concept that would ensure there is clear direction to all provincial natural resource decision makers (permitting, tenures, etc.) that salmon recovery should be prioritized when considering effects of decisions.
- **Coastal Marine Strategy and Watershed Security Strategy and Fund:** The Province is also developing a Coastal Marine Strategy and a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund, each of these will address and support issues that affect wild salmon.
- **Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative:** In June 2021, DFO announced the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative. The strategy's objective is to stem the steep decline of Pacific salmon populations and protect and rebuild stocks where possible by implementing a series of immediate and long-term solutions. B.C. and DFO meet regularly to ensure alignment of provincial and federal strategies.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- All jurisdictions managing fisheries are experiencing challenges related to extreme environmental variability and uncertainty with respect to salmon stock abundance.
- Neighbouring jurisdictions including Washington, Oregon and Alaska are experiencing increasingly variably salmon returns, and an increasing reliance on salmon hatcheries.
- Efforts to address salmon in Washington State include an investment of \$4B

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- BCSRIF is a component of the WSSAP; funding for implementation will be required to match the level of ambition the Province is prepared to take to restore/recover wild salmon.

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## Salmon Aquaculture Policy & Decisions

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The June 2018 policy makes it clear that, effective June 2022, no new tenures will be approved unless:
  - The fish farm operator has negotiated agreements with the First Nation(s) in whose territory they propose to operate; and
  - The operator can satisfy Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) that their farm will not adversely impact wild salmon stocks.
- This approach provides clarity to industry and outlines our expectations moving forward for a sustainable industry that protects wild salmon, embraces reconciliation, and provides good jobs for local communities.
- The Province is dedicated to meaningful engagement with First Nations as demonstrated by this new policy, the work done in the Broughton, and Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), new legislation passed in 2019 to implement the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- Many operators already have agreements with several partnering First Nations. Those types of partnerships will grow and lead to more predictability over the long term as First Nations and industry work together.

### If asked about the December 2020 federal government decision to cease licensing of open-net pen salmon farming in the Discovery Islands by 2022:

- B.C. respects the federal government's position and their authority on the decision of licensing in the Discovery Islands. However, we remain committed to ensuring that our federal counterparts will mitigate the impact of this decision on the affected companies and communities.
- We encourage DFO to consider the principles of UNDRIP in related decisions, including balancing First Nations rights to economic development decisions within their territories.

### If asked about the federal government's 2025 Transition Plan from open-net pen salmon farming in B.C.:

- I am aware of the federal government's intentions and timelines regarding their commitment to a transition from open-net pen systems and look forward to hearing more about their recommended approach and plans.
- We have agreed to participate as an observer in the 2025 Transition Plan to better understand the intent and scope of proposed changes.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- B.C. has made it clear to DFO that any plan developed by 2025 to transition from open-pen technology is built on meaningful and principled engagement involving industry, First Nations, local governments, and the Province. To this end, B.C. is committed to working to find positive and lasting solutions that benefit all involved.

**BACKGROUND:**

- On June 20, 2018, the Province announced new conditions for the disposition of Crown land for salmon aquaculture that replaced the “pause” announced in the 2015 bulletin. These new conditions come into effect for new and replacement tenures as of June 2022 and require that operators:
  - Meet all existing and future federal aquaculture license conditions that assures protection of the health of wild salmon.
  - Demonstrate support from relevant First Nation(s) in whose territory they propose to operate via industry/First Nations agreements; and
  - Meet all provincial *Land Act* policies related to the siting of finfish aquaculture sites.
- As of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, B.C. has again notified operators whose tenures expire before June 30, 2022, of their requirements to provide proof of meeting these conditions to continue operations.
- After consultation with First Nations in December 2020, and in response to Justice Cohen’s response, then Minister Bernadette Jordan announced that DFO would phase out salmon farming operations in the Discovery Islands by June 2022, with the stipulations that no new fish be introduced into the facilities during this time, and that all farms be fish free by June 30, 2022.
- This will affect approximately 26 percent of B.C. farmed salmon capacity, representing 20 percent of provincial aquaculture revenue (\$132M in 2019).
- Currently, four operators in the area have filed a judicial review to the Federal Court of Canada in Vancouver asking the courts to find the decisions made by DFO as unreasonable. A ruling is pending and anticipated for spring 2022.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In British Columbia, the Province issues aquaculture Crown Land leases, and DFO issues aquaculture licences and monitors license conditions. In all other provinces except PEI and territories, the provincial authority issues both the lease and the license.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

N/A

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

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## SEAFOOD INSPECTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Seafood processing is a major contributor to our economy with more than 4,900 British Columbians working directly in this sector, many of them in rural and remote communities (2020 Fast Stats).
- In 2020, provincial production from wild and farmed seafood harvests totaled 272,374 tonnes with a landed value of \$0.976 billion.
- The Fish and Seafood Act (FSA) was brought into force in 2017 and replaced the Fisheries Act and Fish Inspection Act, which were last significantly updated in the 1960s.
- The FSA provides a modern framework that streamlines licensing and sets out higher levels of food safety accountability for those engaged in the seafood industry to better protect public health.
- The FSA is a cornerstone of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' (Ministry) commitment to growth and development of this sector, and the production of safe seafood.
- The Ministry has three seafood inspectors, and other staff who support licensing administration and provide expert knowledge and advice to government and the public.
- In 2021, the Seafood Inspection Program (SIP) issued 422 licences.

### BACKGROUND:

- The SIP is responsible for administering and enforcing the FSA, except the portions related to aquaculture and wild aquatic plant harvesting.
- The primary objective of this regulatory framework is to ensure that fish and seafood are safe for consumption by the public in B.C.
- To ensure food safety, individuals and businesses conducting certain activities in the seafood industry must be licensed and meet regulatory requirements.
- SIP issues three types of licences:
  - Seafood Processor
    - Required by any person who operates a:
      - seafood processing facility; or
      - seafood cold-storage facility.
  - Fish Receiver
    - required by any person who operates a:
      - shore-based facility for the purposes of receiving fish directly from a commercially licensed fisher or a licensed packing vessel;
      - vehicle for the purposes of receiving fish directly from a commercially licensed fisher or a licensed packing vessel; or

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- vessel for the purposes of receiving fish directly from a commercially licensed fisher or a licensed packing vessel that does not hold a federal commercial fishing or packing licence.
- Fisher Vendor
  - required by any commercial fisher who sells catch to:
    - the general public for their own consumption, directly from the harvest vessel; or
    - restaurants or retail stores regulated under the Food Premises Regulation.
- SIP issued 422 licences in 2021, up 5.2% from 2020.
- In 2021, SIP conducted 304 inspections (up 1% from 2020) and 33 investigations (down 25% from 2020).
- To promote food safety and encourage voluntary compliance with the regulatory framework, SIP conducted 25 targeted outreach activities to 1,143 regulated parties in 2021.
- Outreach activities will continue throughout 2022 as an important and necessary supplement to traditional enforcement methods.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Program Revenue:

| 2019     | 2020     | 2021     |
|----------|----------|----------|
| \$92,550 | \$86,380 | \$95,800 |

- Program Budget:

| 2019/20   | 2020/21   | 2021/22   |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| \$596,000 | \$660,000 | \$851,000 |

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**Steelhead & Salmon Status and Bycatch****RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- **Pacific salmon stocks including steelhead have suffered significant declines leading to equivalent declines in the ecosystems and economies that rely on them.**
- **We have a renewed mandate to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon and steelhead populations.**
- **B.C. has taken strong steelhead management actions, which were enhanced in 2019 through the BC-Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Action Plan that outlined common priorities for that year.**
- **We are working across government to ensure that all of the Province's work aligns with the goal of restoring wild salmon and steelhead, and this objective will be built into other strategies that B.C. is undertaking.**
- **Currently, options for a B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy & Action Plan (WSSAP) are being developed that build off of work and recommendations from First Nations, stewardship groups and others.**
- **We are also aware of the significant commitment from the federal government through their \$647M Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, and are expecting to work closely to ensure there is a coordinated strategy to recover wild salmon and steelhead in partnership with First Nations in B.C.**
- **B.C. is keenly aware of the concerns about Alaskan harvest of salmon and steelhead originating in B.C. rivers, and they will be raised in several forums, including the Pacific Salmon Commission.**
- **We know there have been tough years for salmon harvesters and First Nations who depend on these stocks for their communities' well-being.**
- **B.C. will continue efforts with various governments and partners to encourage the reduction of by-catch in the Alaskan salmon, halibut, and trawl fisheries.**

**BACKGROUND:**

- **Wild Pacific salmon stocks have suffered significant declines leading to declines in the ecosystems and economies that rely on them. Returns to B.C. natal streams overall in 2020 were the lowest on record, and 2021 was not much better.**
- **For 2022, salmon returns will be low, and much like 2021, although it will be a dominant Adams River sockeye year, which could bring some abundance, and potential for harvest.**
- **Over 60 salmon and trout designatable units (DUs) have been recently, or will soon be, assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), for potential listing under SARA.**
- **Interior Fraser Steelhead (IFS) remain at extreme conservation concern.**
- **Skeena River - In 2021 the return of steelhead stocks to the Skeena River also dropped dramatically, leading to significant conservation concerns.**

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- B.C. is working within the provincial agencies, closely with DFO, recreational and commercial fishers, First Nations, and with stakeholders on the implementation of the Interior Fraser Steelhead Emergency Recovery Plan.

Alaska Bycatch - The bycatch of Canadian origin salmon in Alaska's District 104 fishery – sockeye (from Skeena /Nass) and from the Fraser system, are a focus of attention again, as Canadian, and (Southern US stocks) decline, and harvests reduced. Other species such as Northern Coho, Fraser chinook, and steelhead are included.

- The recent Marine Conservation Caucus (MCC) report - ***Alaskan Interceptions of BC Salmon: State of Knowledge***, led to media interest and increased sensitivities with the U.S.
  - B.C. will continue efforts with various governments to encourage the reduction of by-catch in the Alaskan salmon, halibut, and trawl fisheries.
- Steelhead -Significant, but unknown amounts of steelhead bycatch occur in Alaska.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- All jurisdictions managing fisheries are experiencing challenges related to extreme environmental variability and uncertainty with respect to stock abundance, and the widespread impacts of climate change, including Washington, Oregon, and Alaska.
- Steelhead are subject to management measures by both the provincial government (FLNR) and federal government.
- The conduct of fisheries and the bycatch of Canadian origin salmon in Alaska are within the CDA-US Pacific Salmon Commission and the terms of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.
- Efforts to address salmon conservation in Washington State include an investment of \$4B.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Implementation of the B.C. Wild Salmon Strategy and Action Plan will require funding.
- The BC Salmon Restoration & Innovation Fund (see related Estimate Note) is a critical component of the WSSAP; funding for implementation will be required to match the level of ambition the province is prepared to take to restore/recover wild salmon and steelhead.

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## BCFIRB APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS OVERVIEW

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Tribunals, such as the BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB), allow for a more flexible, timely and affordable approach to fair dispute resolution than the courts.
- BCFIRB was one of the first tribunals in BC to use Alternate Dispute Resolution (e.g., facilitated agreements) and continues to use such methods whenever possible.
- Appeals and complaints are within the independent jurisdiction of BCFIRB, and it is not appropriate for any comment about any specific case before BCFIRB.
- BCFIRB routinely posts its decisions on its website.

### BACKGROUND:

- Under its statutory mandates, BCFIRB hears appeals and complaints under:
  - *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act (NPMA)*--Appeals of regulated marketing board and commission orders and decisions;
  - *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act (FPPA)*--Complaints about farm practices from persons disturbed by odour, noise, dust or other disturbances arising from agriculture or aquaculture operations;
  - *Protection of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCAA)*--Appeals of certain animal custody and cost decisions of the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).
- BCFIRB is accountable to the courts for its decisions (Judicial Review) and the Ombudsperson for its practices and procedures.
- BCFIRB must follow the principles of natural justice, administrative law and due process in proceedings as set out in its rules of practice and procedure.
- BCFIRB supports resolution of cases through Alternative Dispute Resolution which seeks to bring parties together to settle disputes without the need for a hearing.
- For 2021/22, as of September 30, 2021, BCFIRB has administered 36 cases. Of these, 12 have been resolved – 6 decided through a hearing, and 6 resolved through settlement, withdrawal or dismissal.
- There were three active Judicial Reviews of BCFIRB decisions in 2021/22, three of which remain unclosed as of September 30, 2021.

### CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:

- There are 13 federal and provincial regulated marketing supervisory bodies in Canada. Other provinces have tribunals that deal with animal welfare appeals. Most provinces have a “farm practices board” or equivalent body.

### PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE):

- Case costs are subject to the number of parties and legal complexities.
- Advice/Recommendations

ESTIMATE NOTE- FISCAL 2022/23 Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries  
 Confidential Advice to Minister

Advice/Recommendations Costs can range considerably higher for hearings that span 3-5 (or more) days. Advice/Recommendations  
 Advice/Recommendations

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## CHICKEN SECTOR PRICING

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- BCFIRB is actively engaged in a supervisory review process of long-term chicken sector pricing to ensure market stability for the broiler chicken sector, with the BC Chicken Marketing Board (Chicken Board) and BC Hatching Egg Commission (Commission). The review was launched in April 2020 and remains ongoing.
- There are also short-term pricing pressures present, particularly due to an exceptional spike in BC feed costs compared to Ontario within the last few months. BCFIRB is taking this issue into consideration as it works with the two boards on pricing stability for the sectors.
- The Chicken Board and Commission are working with stakeholders and will be providing long-term pricing structure recommendations to BCFIRB for review and decision later this spring.
- The overall goal is a long-term BC chicken sector pricing strategy that balances the costs and interests of all stakeholders, is adaptive, resilient and sustainable into the future, and creates a united vision for the BC chicken industry.

### BACKGROUND:

- Pricing tensions in BC are exacerbated by BC's high cost of production (feed and chicks), combined with Ontario's increasingly competitive price position and high volume of production.
- Under legislation, the Chicken Board is responsible for setting the price a grower is paid for their chicken. The Commission is responsible for setting the price a hatching egg producer receives for their chicks, and the price growers pay hatcheries for chicks.
- If any affected party disagrees with the prices set by the Chicken Board and/or the Commission, the party has the right of appeal to BCFIRB. BCFIRB, in turn, can hear the appeal and/or proactively address market or pricing concerns through its supervisory policy role.

#### Supervisory Review

- In March 2020, BCFIRB established a Chicken Sector Pricing Supervisory Review to address the Commission's notice to exit the price linkage agreement with the Chicken Board. In April 2020, given the CMB's failure to issue a decision on a long-term pricing formula by March 2020, after it was granted two deadline extensions, the development of a long-term chicken pricing formula was included in the scope of the Supervisory Review.
- The Supervisory Review continues and a long-term pricing formula for live chicken remains outstanding.
- BCFIRB has expended significant time and resources on this file, including legal services and direct costs for consulting expertise to assist both boards.

- The Commission has made considerable progress over the past two years and has developed a cost of production-based pricing formula for the hatching egg sector that is currently with stakeholders for review.
- The Chicken Board has recently informed BCFIRB and industry stakeholders that it may take them another 1-2 years to develop a long-term pricing formula.
- While COVID and weather and flooding related impacts contributed to delays in reaching a long-term pricing solution, considerable work remains to be done.
- The Chicken Board and Commission plan to submit recommendations around long-term pricing and next steps to BCFIRB in late February 2022. In the meantime, various short-term pricing issues and appeals continue to arise, particularly recently given increases in the cost of feed compared to Ontario.
- When BCFIRB receives the final recommendations, it will determine what, if any, further work is needed before a sound marketing policy decision can be made.
- Throughout the course of the Review, the PPPABC and BCCGA have continued to file appeals. The appeals have been deferred pending the outcome of the Review process after hearing from the parties.
- All BC poultry producers are currently facing an exceptional spike in feed costs.
- The Chicken Board and Commission are aware of the resulting business pressure, particularly for new entrant growers, and are consulting with producers, processors and each other on interim solutions while work continues on long-term pricing.

#### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- All provinces have the equivalent of a BC Chicken Marketing Board and BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission.
- BC chicken production is higher cost compared to most other provinces, primarily due to the high cost of feed and chicks. Other costs such as land may have some influence, but feed and chicks is considered the major factor.

#### **PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations

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## BC VEGETABLE MARKETING COMMISSION

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Prokam Enterprises Ltd. (Prokam) and MPL British Columbia Distributors Inc.'s (MPL) allegations of unlawful activity against certain BC Vegetable Marketing Commission (Commission) members and staff are very serious.
- The matter falls within BCFIRB's jurisdiction. All questions and issues related to the allegations against Commissioners and staff should be immediately directed to BCFIRB.
- MPL has a market agency application currently before BCFIRB for decision. BCFIRB is reviewing the matter and it is not appropriate for the Minister to make statements or intervene with respect to issues under BCFIRB's supervisory authority.
- CFP Marketing Corporation's (CFP) market agency application is before the Commission for decision, and the Commission decision will be submitted to BCFIRB for review in future.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Commission regulates B.C. storage<sup>1</sup>, processing<sup>2</sup> and greenhouse<sup>3</sup> crop production and marketing.
- Producers market the majority of regulated vegetables through "designated agencies". These agencies are private sector businesses that are given certain legislated authorities by the Commission, for the efficient mass marketing of regulated vegetables, which are intended to maximize benefits to producers.
- Designated agencies are licensed by the Commission and must be prior approved by BCFIRB per requirements set out in legislation.
- BC vegetable producers face competition from low-priced, high-volume imports.
- BCFIRB is responsible for ensuring the Commission operates in an accountable manner to deliver sound marketing policy in the public interest.

#### Commission Governance

- In July 2021, the Province amended the BC Vegetable Scheme under the Natural Products Marketing Act (BC), allowing for the appointment of two additional independent members. These members were appointed by the Commission through a BCFIRB approved and supervised process in January 2022.

#### Supervisory Review - Allegations of Bad Faith and Unlawful Activity

- BCFIRB initiated a supervisory review (Review) on May 26, 2021, after it learned that there were allegations of unlawful activity made in Notices of Civil Claim (NOCCs) filed with the BC Supreme Court by Prokam<sup>4</sup> and MPL<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beets, onions, turnips, rutabaga, parsnips

<sup>2</sup> Beans, peas, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, corn, strawberries

<sup>3</sup> Cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers

<sup>4</sup> BC producer who grows unregulated and regulated (potatoes) vegetables.

<sup>5</sup> Ontario greenhouse business seeking an agency licence to market BC greenhouse vegetables.

- The NOCCs allege abuse of public office and serious misconduct by certain current and former Commission members and staff, and MPL and Prokam are seeking damages.
- Both Prokam and MPL have history with the Commission and BCFIRB, including the filing of multiple appeals and judicial reviews of various decisions.
- The Review is intended to determine whether the current allegations set out in the NOCCs can be substantiated, and what resulting BCFIRB orders or directions may be required as a result of the findings.
- Given the extremely serious nature of the allegations, BCFIRB’s Review process is designed to ensure a high degree of procedural fairness and legal soundness.
- BCFIRB’s review does not prevent Prokam or MPL from pursuing their NOCCs in court.
- A BCFIRB decision is expected in summer 2022 following the close of an extensive oral hearing process, which has included significant investigation of evidence, review of written documentation, interviews and witness testimony.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Many provinces have some form of provincially regulated vegetable production.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The litigation brought by Prokam and MPL is having significant impact on BCFIRB’s budget for legal expenses. This is expected to continue into 2022/23.

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## BCFIRB GOVERNANCE OF BC'S REGULATED MARKETING SECTOR

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- BCFIRB annually reports and publishes its service and strategic objectives. BCFIRB's last annual report was published in December 2021.
- BCFIRB has published two Summary Reports on its Public Accountability and Reporting Project (PARP) in October 2019 and March 2021. A third report is expected in late February or March 2022.
- The PARP information provides the agri-food industry, government, the commodity boards and BCFIRB with a deeper understanding of the current state of each regulated sector in BC and eventually, a comprehensive, objective, evidence-based picture of how each sector is evolving over time.

### BACKGROUND:

- Use of appropriate governance and fiscal procedures demonstrates accountability for legislative authorities and supports good industry outcomes.
- BCFIRB is accountable to the Ministry for its budget, to the courts for its decisions and to the Ombudsperson for its practices and procedures.
- In 2021/22, all boards have generally demonstrated that they are following regulatory requirements, using sound decision making practices, and are using, or are in the process of adopting, good governance tools.
- BCFIRB continues to use a user experience survey that was implemented in June 2017, focusing on staff response times, transparency and BCFIRB's website.

### CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:

- These governance considerations apply in all provinces and are the subject of a National Association of Agri-food Supervisory Agencies (NAASA) principles document.

### PROGRAM EXPENDITURE/REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE)

- N/A

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## FEDERAL PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Supply management is a national system intended to provide a stable supply of domestic food while ensuring a fair return for efficient farmers, in the following sectors: broiler hatching eggs, chicken, dairy, eggs and turkey.
- Supply management in Canada is based on federal and provincial legislation and operates under various Federal Provincial Agreements (FPAs).
- FPAs establish how federal and provincial legislation and regulations work in coordination to deliver the policy intent of supply management.
- FPAs enable the cooperative application of legislation in managing the production and marketing of the supply managed commodities.
- The Minister, BCFIRB and the regulated agricultural boards and commissions have various signatory roles in relation to FPAs. While often joint signatories to the same agreements, it is not appropriate for the Minister and BCFIRB to intervene in each other's signatory roles.

### Background:

- BCFIRB, the Minister and the four BC poultry commodity boards are all signatories to the poultry FPAs. Other signatories include the federal Minister, national agencies (e.g., Chicken Farmers of Canada), Farm Products Council of Canada (FPCC), and other provincial ministers, supervisory agencies and commodity boards.
- The BC Milk Board is the only BC signatory to the FPA in the dairy industry, which is called the National Milk Marketing Agreement (BCFIRB and the Minister are not signatories). BCFIRB approval is required however before the BC Milk Marketing Board may enter into federal or inter-provincial agreements.

#### Egg FPA

- BCFIRB representatives, along with Ministry staff and the BC Egg Marketing Board, are currently engaged provincially and nationally with updates to the Egg FPA.
- An updated draft Egg FPA is expected to be presented to all signatories for review and sign-off in 2022. The review process started in 2016.

#### Chicken Operating Agreement

- This agreement establishes how national production volumes are determined and shared across provinces. Under the BC Chicken Marketing Scheme, the BC Chicken Marketing Board requires BCFIRB prior approval for entering in to federal-provincial agreements.

### CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON

- All provinces and the Northwest Territories participate in supply management in Canada, with all being signatories to various FPAs.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE): N/A**

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## NEW ENTRANT OVERVIEW IN SUPPLY MANAGED AND REGULATED SECTORS

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Entry opportunities for new farmers are essential for the strength, viability and credibility of all of the regulated agriculture sectors, especially those that are supply managed, as entry to those sectors is limited.
- All commodity boards in BC provide specialized entry opportunities for smaller scale producers. For example, through licence exemptions, low volume permits, or programs aimed at the niche or small producers.
- All of BC's supply managed commodity boards operate New Entrant Programs (NEPs). Entry requirements and applicant interest varies between sectors.
- Providing quota at no cost to new farmers in the supply managed sectors encourages market and production innovation, supports regional development and brings diversity, new ideas and new voices to the supply management system.
- Persons aggrieved by or dissatisfied with the process or outcome of a new entrant selection have the right to appeal to BCFIRB.

### BACKGROUND:

#### New Small-scale Farmers

- For small-scale farming, the poultry boards exempt personal production from their rules; and provide permits for smaller scale farmers.
- In dairy, the BC Milk Board offers quota for small-scale production-processing ventures.
- Small-scale producers in the regulated marketing sectors are either exempt from commodity board rules by government regulation (hogs, cranberries) or boards have put in place their own production volume exemptions (vegetables).

#### New Farmer Entry

- New farmers to regulated marketing (hogs, cranberries, vegetables) only need to apply to the respective boards for a licence. To date, hogs, cranberries and vegetables have not placed limits on the number of licenses issued.
- All supply managed boards operate NEPs to select successful applicants through a published process and issue them quota at no cost.
- Basic NEP eligibility criteria established by BCFIRB requires that prospective participants are BC residents, have not previously held quota, and are committed to farming.
- Commodity boards can use new entrant programs and small-lot programs to help address regional and niche marketing demands. For example, the Egg Board selected one new entrant in 2021 from outside the Lower Mainland, while the Turkey Board gives priority status to regional applicants and those interested in organic production.

**Summary of Supply Management New Entrant Programs:**

- The Milk Marketing Board implemented a new lottery-based NEP in 2019. Given the success and interest in the program, the Milk Board decided to hold an annual, versus biennial, NEP process. In 2022, 66 applications were received, and the 3 successful applicants will be in milk production by December 2023. They have invited approximately 29 new entrants over the last 6 years.
- The Chicken Marketing Board operates a lottery-based NEP with 3 different lists for the Interior, the Lower Mainland, and Vancouver Island. They have invited approximately 29 new entrants in the past six years, including the most recent, six that started in 2020. As of 2022, there are six applicants on the Lower Mainland waitlist, and two on the Interior waitlist. The Chicken Board is not accepting new applications at this time. New entrants are assigned a mentor chicken farmer by the BC Chicken Growers Association.
- The Egg Marketing Board runs a lottery-based NEP, which was updated in June 2021. They have invited approximately 18 new entrants into the sector over the past six years. In 2021, one eligible new producer was offered quota through the NEP program.
- The Broiler Egg Hatching Commission operates a waitlist-based NEP. Their last draw was in 2011 and they have been inviting entrants from that list since. They have invited six new entrants for the list, five of which have begun production and one declined. As of spring 2022, there were 4 people on the waitlist. The Commission temporarily suspended its NEP in 2021 to review the program. The review was delayed by the heat dome, flooding, and COVID-19. The Commission is committed to conducting the review in 2022.
- The Turkey Marketing Board operates a waitlist-based NEP with priority given first to organic, and then regional applicants and is currently taking applications. They have invited approximately nine new entrants in the past 6 years. There are currently three people on the wait list for 2022, with another application in process. The Board is working with applicants to assemble business plans and once complete will assess/review the applications.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Most provinces have NEPs for their supply managed milk, chicken and eggs sectors.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Not applicable

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## RESPONSIBILITIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) is an independent administrative tribunal that operates at arm's length from government.
- Over 25 tribunals in BC provide less expensive and timely access to expert decision making as an alternative to the courts.
- As a tribunal, BCFIRB must observe the principles of natural justice and administrative law and have expertise in its statutory mandates.
- BCFIRB statutory mandates include hearing appeals and complaints as well as supervising BC's regulated agricultural commodity boards and commissions.

### Background:

- BCFIRB's statutorily mandated responsibilities are established in *the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act*, the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*, the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* and are supported by the *Administrative Tribunals Act*. These responsibilities include:
  - Supervising BC's regulated commodity boards and commissions
  - Being a signatory to formal federal-provincial agreements in regulated marketing
  - Hearing appeals of regulated marketing board and commission orders and decisions
  - Hearing appeals of certain animal custody and cost decisions of the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)
  - Hearing farm practices complaints from persons disturbed by odour, noise, dust and other disturbances arising from agriculture and aquaculture operations
  - Conducting farm practices studies
- BC's regulated commodity boards and commissions, supervised by BCFIRB:
  - BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission
  - BC Chicken Marketing Board
  - BC Egg Marketing Board
  - BC Milk Marketing Board
  - BC Turkey Marketing Board
  - BC Hog Marketing Commission
  - BC Cranberry Marketing Commission
  - BC Vegetable Marketing Commission
- Members are appointed to BCFIRB by Cabinet.
- BCFIRB is one of BC's senior tribunals, established in 1934. BCFIRB was one of the first tribunals in BC to use Alternate Dispute Resolution methods to improve its capacity and effectiveness (e.g., negotiated agreements and settlements).

- Tribunals need not follow court-like procedures. Instead they adopt practices and procedures – which must be fair – that enable them to resolve disputes.
- BCFIRB has published detailed policy and procedure documents that set out the process, steps and timeframes associated with the filing and hearing of appeals and complaints under its different statutory mandates, consistent with the *Administrative Tribunals Act*.
- The time to render a decision will vary, depending on the issue and characteristics of an individual case, ranging from a few weeks to several months or longer in some instances.
- BCFIRB posts all decisions on its website as well as a listing of all active appeals and complaints. BCFIRB decisions can be appealed to the BC Supreme Court on point of law or jurisdiction, known as Judicial Review (JR).
- Complaints about BCFIRB and procedures can be investigated by the Ombudsperson.
- BCFIRB regularly reports on service performance.
- While government recognizes BCFIRB’s independence as an administrative tribunal in executing its statutory mandates, BCFIRB is accountable to the Minister concerning its budget and administrative mandate.

Animal Welfare

- Animal welfare incidents in dairy, eggs and chicken had serious impacts to these industries and their value chains.
- Overarching responsibility for BC's biosecurity and animal welfare legislation rests with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.
- BCFIRB has legislated oversight and appeal responsibilities in relation to biosecurity and animal welfare in regulated marketing. BCFIRB is responsible for ensuring the commodity boards establish and enforce appropriate standards to maintain orderly marketing.
- BC's agricultural commodity boards have legislated authorities to establish and enforce biosecurity and animal welfare standards. The boards have either made the relevant Codes of Practice mandatory for licensed producers; or, made national agency animal-care programs, that are based on the Codes of Practice mandatory for licensed producers.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- There are 13 federal and provincial agricultural regulated marketing supervisory bodies in Canada, with eight having a similar dual supervisory/appellate role as BCFIRB.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

- BCFIRB’s budget in 2021/22 is \$1,378,000.

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## SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Supply management is a national regulatory system established by federal and provincial legislation and agreements. It is intended to help ensure a continuous and stable supply of domestic food and a fair return to efficient producers.
- The federal government, all provinces and the Northwest Territories participate in Canada's supply management system.
- Despite very significant challenges in 2020 and 2021 with the ongoing pandemic, combined with severe weather-related events, including flooding and the heat-dome, production of regulated commodities has remained stable.
- There were no significant changes in production volume or producer numbers in 2019 and 2020 in the regulated sectors. There were minor increases in production volume for some sectors, with increases in specialty production. There was little change in regional distribution of production.

### BACKGROUND:

- Most countries provide some form of agricultural supports or subsidies to protect against the "boom and bust" economic cycles that can be associated with agricultural markets. These cycles can result in destructive competition and a volatile food supply.
- Established in the 1970's, supply management works through legislated production, price and import controls – often referred to as the "3 pillars".
- These controls require cooperation between federal and provincial jurisdictions, achieved through Federal-Provincial Agreements (FPAs).
- BC's supply managed industries (broiler hatching eggs, chicken, dairy, eggs, turkey), make a significant contribution to B.C.'s agri-food sector, accounting for approximately 50% of B.C.'s farm gate receipts, about \$2 billion, making these industries – including their processing and marketing sectors – a significant part of B.C.'s agri-economy, creating jobs and supply chain benefits.

#### Advantages of supply management

- Consistent, stable and safe supply of domestically produced food
- Stable prices for consumers and fair returns for producers
- Farmers kept in business, protected from the "boom and bust cycles" characteristic of some agricultural markets
- Prevents overproduction resulting in race to the bottom prices and wasteful dumping
- Provision of adequate producer earnings to cover costs associated with biosecurity, food safety, innovation and other public interest goals
- Viability of farms in more remote areas and contribution to local economies
- System funded by the farmers - not the taxpayer

Disadvantages of supply management

- Consumer perception of high dairy and poultry prices
- Barriers to entry for new farmers due to limited amounts of quota
- Restricted output and range of products – reduced incentive for producers to innovate as production and sales are guaranteed
- Limited processor and consumer access to potentially lower priced imports, such as those from the United States

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- The federal government, all provinces and the Northwest Territories participate in supply management in Canada, with all being signatories to various FPAs.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

- Total farm gate receipts for agricultural commodities in 2020 was \$4.03 billion. The supply managed industries (broiler hatching eggs, chicken, dairy, eggs, turkey) account for approximately 50% of BC's farm gate receipts.

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## **BC Beef Brand/ Packing Plant**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- We are supporting B.C. producers, not only for the fresh, quality foods they provide us, but because the agriculture and food industry is a job-creator and an integral part of B.C.'s economy.
- B.C.'s beef producers have been directly impacted by supply chain disruptions resulting from closures of and reliance on large meat processing plants in Alberta. These risks are still present.
- We have invested in B.C.'s food supply and B.C. farms through the development of the B.C. beef brand "Genuine BC Beef", processed by federally inspected abattoirs.
- Increased revenues and improved operating margins for B.C. beef producers will be achieved through reduced barriers to processing facilities.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fish and Food "Local Meat Production and Inspection in British Columbia" (2018) stated that a lack of slaughter capacity was strongly identified as a problem by producers and processors alike.
- For the past several years the British Columbia Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) has been working towards a federally inspected beef processing facility in Interior B.C. This facility would take advantage of demand for locally produced and processed BC beef and allow producers to share in the profits.
- The COVID-19 pandemic focussed the plan to establishing, promoting, and marketing a B.C. beef brand while leasing an existing underutilized facility.
- Funding for this work has been provided through the following initiatives:
  - Viability initiative through Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF) \$124,000 (2015).
  - Business plan and feasibility study through the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) \$450,000 (2018/19).
  - 'BC Beef Packing Plant, Phase 1: Commercialization Roadmap (Si025) - through IAF for \$138,185 (2019/20).
  - Development and operationalization of Genuine BC Beef brand through the AFF \$1,050,000 (2020/21).
- Genuine BC Beef brand project objectives completed in 2021/22 include:
  - Formation of a B.C. Beef producer organization (B.C Beef Producer's Inc. - BCBPI).
  - Preparation of a B.C. brand sales and marketing plan.
  - Establishment of a B.C. based processing capacity partnership, including leasing, and upgrading a federal meat processor (KML in Westwold, BC).
- BCBPI was unable to sell the required number of shares (i.e., obtain sufficient financial resources) to operate this facility solely under a BCBPI lease.
- BCBPI could not maintain the lease and it was terminated, returning operations back to

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KML. Should KML resume operations, BCBPI has an agreement to allow a portion of the slaughter time for BCBPI to function and demonstrate to other producers that this is a viable model to invest in.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In 2015, slaughter in provincially regulated facilities represented 13 percent of total cattle marketed from B.C.
- B.C. has a network of small provincially inspected abattoirs. Most B.C. livestock is currently sold to feedlots in Alberta for finishing and packing. Alberta has two large federally inspected packing facilities.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE/REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- To date \$1,762,185 has been provided in support to the project by IAF and the Ministry.
- No anticipated expenditures for fiscal 2022/23.

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## Livestock Protection Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Province continues to partner with the B.C. Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) to deliver a Livestock Protection Program (LPP).
- LPP is part of the Ministry's larger Wildlife Damage Mitigation Initiative. The objective of the Initiative is to prevent and reduce adverse interactions between wildlife and agriculture.
- The goal of the Program is to protect beef cattle, dairy cattle, and sheep from wolf and coyote attacks by promoting prevention techniques (best management practices) and by providing mitigation services (control) when verified predator attacks occur. The Program also facilitates compensation payments.
- For some ranchers, the loss of cattle to wolves and coyotes puts the viability of their business at risk. LPP is designed to protect the viability of those ranching families.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Conservation Officer Service (COS) within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ECCS) has the responsibility for mitigating verified livestock predation and attacks caused by wolves and coyotes. The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) has the responsibility for the management of wolf populations including the setting of regulations and the issuance of permits.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries (AFF) delivers wildlife compensation through the Agriculture Wildlife Program (AWP). Best management practices are promoted by AFF and mitigation initiatives are carried out through the LPP.
- In the fall of 2015, the Province supported the creation of a wolf and coyote mitigation program called the Livestock Protection Program (LPP), delivered by the B.C. Cattlemen's Association (BCCA). The expected result of LPP is fewer attacks and reduced harm on livestock, reduced AFF compensation from predation losses, and reduced production costs for producers allowing them to expand or invest in other areas of their enterprise.
- LPP provides for registration, verification (determines and documents causes of death), and prevention and mitigation services (trapping of wolves and/or coyotes) to producers of cattle and/or sheep. The Program is guided by strict program protocols and *Wildlife Act* permit conditions. Verifications are approved through the COS and inform AFF compensation payments. Mitigation services are provided only after verification services confirm a wolf and/or coyote attack and the registrant is confirmed to be using best management practices.
- The Program only targets coyotes and wolves that have preyed on livestock, including cattle, dairy cows or sheep. As the Province is responsible for wildlife management,

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including wolves, the Province therefore has a role to play in programs that prevent and mitigate the damage or impact wolves have on British Columbians.

- The Program is consistent with the direction provided in the 2014 Management Plan for the Grey Wolf in B.C., which ensures that wolf populations are self-sustaining but recognizes that wolf attacks on cattle can be addressed in a timely manner.
- Under this Program, trapping only takes place in the immediate vicinity of verified livestock losses or attacks due to wolves or coyotes.
- There are an estimated 8,500 wolves in B.C. In 2017/18 the LPP trapped an average of 200 wolves per year. In 2019/20, 137 wolves have been trapped, and in 2020/21 79 wolves have been trapped to-date.
- The Program is jointly managed with FLNRORD, COS, AFF and BCCA through an Oversight Committee. The Oversight Committee also has representation from the B.C. Trappers Association and the B.C. Sheep Federation.
- The Program provides opportunities for indigenous people to work with trained wildlife specialists and/or become wildlife specialists in their traditional territories.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In other provinces, livestock predator interactions are managed directly by government agencies. Governments such as Alberta, have reached out to B.C., with interest in adopting a model similar to LPP.
- The provincial government’s COS holds the responsibility for all livestock predator interactions with the exception of wolves and coyotes on eligible livestock which are managed through the B.C. Cattlemen’s Association and the LPP.
- B.C. is unique in that it is one of the only provinces working together with industry to administer support to impacted agriculture producers, resulting in higher client satisfaction and success in B.C.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information
- Ministry staff time of approx. 0.1 FTE is allocated to the Program.

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## Beef - Prescribed Areas

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- B.C.'s brand registration and inspection program protects cattle (dairy and beef), horse and bison owners against animal theft, straying or misappropriation.
- The program includes the registration of livestock brands and the inspection of cattle and horses in prescribed areas of the province for lawful possession prior to transportation, sale, or slaughter.
- We will continue to work with B.C.'s farmers and ranchers to ensure an effective registration and inspection program.
- This work includes conversations on the possibility of expanding the prescribed livestock inspection area to encompass the whole province due to the increased transport of livestock within B.C.

### BACKGROUND:

B.C.'s brand registration and inspection program, regulated by the LIR, protects cattle (dairy and beef), horse and bison owners against animal theft, straying or misappropriation. In 1997, the then Minister of Agriculture designated Ownership Identification Inc. (OII), a private industry-owned entity, to administer the program under the auspices of the LIR and the *Livestock Inspection Act (LIA)*.

The program consists of livestock brand registration and the inspection of cattle and horses for lawful possession prior to transportation, sale, or slaughter. Branding of livestock for identification purposes under the *LIA* is voluntary, however, inspections of ownership and use of a Form 3 manifest are mandatory for movements through or within the Prescribed Area. Current LIR requirements apply equally to dairy and beef cattle. Horses are also included but compliance within that sector is reportedly low. The Prescribed Area is currently comprised of five brand inspection zones and does not include the Lower Mainland or Vancouver Island.

In 2015, the Ministry initiated further exploration into the beef industry's Prescribed Area expansion proposal, and in 2016, the Ministry formed a working group composed of staff and industry representatives from the beef and dairy sectors.

Advice/Recommendations

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- 0.05 FTE Industry Specialist, Beef and Livestock
- 0.02 FTE Industry Specialist, Dairy and Pork

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## Bees-Bee BC Program & Bee Technology & Transfer Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Government recognizes the critical and vital role bees play in our environment and to agriculture, not just in British Columbia but around the world.
- Crops and flowering plants cannot live and reproduce without the help of bees. That is why our government takes bee health seriously and has committed \$450,000 to the Bee BC program since 2018.
- In May 2021, the Minister announced a new Bee Tech Transfer Program as a next phase of the Bee BC Program. The program is delivered by the BC Honey Producers Association (BCHPA) and supported by the Ministry with \$525K over the next three years.
- Honeybees play a major role in agriculture as pollinators of crops, contributing from \$250M to \$300M per year to the economy in British Columbia.

### BACKGROUND:

#### Industry

- There are currently approximately 4,300 beekeepers that operate an estimated 62,000 colonies. Well over 4,000 of these beekeepers (>93 percent) are hobbyists with less than 10 colonies and the majority with less than 4 colonies. Then, there are a few hundred beekeepers that operate between 10 and 100 colonies while the remaining few dozen beekeepers operate over 100 colonies.
- While beekeeping businesses operate in all provinces, the majority of honeybee colonies and honey production in Canada are kept in the Prairies (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) where long summer days and a favorable crop mix are ideal for foraging.

#### Ministry support:

- The Bee BC Program was launched on May 29, 2018, with the objective to enhance bee health throughout the province.
  - The program supported small scale regional/community-based projects to research, explore, field-test and share information about best management practices associated with bee health.
  - Up to \$5,000 per project was available through the program to assist regional or community-based organizations, beekeeping associations and/or beekeepers with project costs. The program has been delivered by the B.C. Investment Agriculture Foundation.
  - Since its introduction in 2018, the program has supported:
    - 86 funded projects; and
    - \$358,390 invested in bee health projects throughout the province.

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- The three-year Bee Tech Transfer Program (TTP) led by BCHA was recently launched to further enhance B.C.'s apiculture industry. Its objectives include enhancement of standardized knowledge and promotion of Best Management Practices (BMP) through education, applied research and extension services.
  - Delivery of the TTP's objectives include:
    - Applied research projects and demonstration of BMPs to beekeepers around B.C.
    - Regional workshops on Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
    - Development of locally raised queens and queen-breeding
    - Demonstrative research in a BCHA-established apiary
    - Research and support to bee-related projects conducted by academic institutions

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Most provinces include beekeepers and beekeeping as eligible for funding programs related to research, biosecurity, and/or animal health.
- Ontario offers up to \$3,500 for beekeepers to improve pest management and grow bee-related businesses.
- Saskatchewan's Apiculture - Producer Rebate Program offers apiarists a rebate of up to \$15,000 for equipment expenses that improve biosecurity practices.
- New Brunswick's Honeybee Industry Development Program offers up to \$10,000 for beekeepers to assist in the purchase or on-farm construction of beekeeping equipment.
- Manitoba offers up to \$3,500 under the AG Action Manitoba Program that provides funding to improve pest management and encourage a responsible use of antibiotics.
- There are currently five technology transfer teams for apiculture in Canada that work directly with beekeepers to analyze and disseminate information, including Atlantic, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- 0.2 FTE (ESSB) is committed to work with BCHA.
- Total investment in the Bee BC program between 2018-19 and 2021-22 (four fiscal years) is up to \$450,000.
- Total provincial investment in the Bee BC program is \$250,000 for the period 2018-19 to 2021-22.
  - \$42,500 in 2018-19
  - \$107,500 in 2019-20
  - \$50,000 in 2020-21
  - \$50,000 in 2021-22
- The budget for the Bee Tech Transfer Program is \$525,000 over three years (\$175,000 per year, 2021-2024)

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## HONEYBEE IMPORTS AND THE THREAT TO BEE HEALTH

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The import ban of US “bee packages” has polarized the Canadian beekeeping industry since its implementation in 1987.
- The majority of Canadian beekeepers support the import restriction of US bee packages because of concerns about disease and pest introduction.
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) completed a risk assessment in October 2013 and recommended a continuation of the import restriction of US bee packages.
- The import of US honeybee queens from California and Hawaii has been permitted under CFIA for nearly 20 years. The continued threat of Africanized Honeybees (AHB) has demanded a regular review of inspection standards and import conditions of honeybee queens.
- Honeybee packages and queens from Australia, New Zealand and Chile are authorized under CFIA permit. In 2020, CFIA permitted limited import of queens (only) from Ukraine and Malta/Italy under permit.

### BACKGROUND:

- After the Varroa mite was first discovered in the USA in 1987, the CFIA restricted the importation of honeybees from the US to protect Canadian honeybee colonies from Varroa and other exotic bee pathogens. The import ban of bee packages has been in place ever since.
- Since the early 2000's, honeybee queens imported from selected Californian and Hawaiian breeders have been permitted.
- Since the arrival of AHB in North America in 1990, the requirement has been in place that exporters of California queens must be at a minimum distance of 160 km from the nearest AHB confirmation.
- In 2020, Canada agreed to reduce the minimum distance to 80 km without increasing the risk of AHB introduction into Canada.
- The import restriction of US bee packages has remained in place.
- A number of commercial beekeepers have continued to oppose the import ban of US bee packages and lobbied federal and provincial governments to overturn the ban. The group has initiated a federal class action lawsuit which is expected to start hearings in May 2022, claiming that conditions have changed and that the import ban is no longer justified.
- CFIA's 2013 risk assessment identified four risk factors of which two were significant:
  - The import of bees from California carries the risk of AHB introduction.
  - Small Hive Beetle (SHB) is expected to be readily introduced into Canada with US bee package imports.

**DISCUSSION:**

- Honeybee queens from California have been imported into Canada for nearly 20 years. There has been no introduction of AHB genes into Canada.
- Permitting Californian bee packages would not increase the risk of AHB introduction.
- SHB was first confirmed in BC in 2015. Subsequent surveys have failed to detect SHB. The sub-tropical beetle is considered a minor pest that is not expected to become established in Western Canada due to climatic and environmental conditions.
- Canada’s commercial beekeeping sector is concentrated in the Prairie provinces. Approximately 25,000 bee packages and nearly 200,000 queens are imported each spring. Bee packages can only be imported from Australia, New Zealand, and Chile. Nearly 90% of imported queens come from California and Hawaii.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- The BC Honey Producers Association has historically been in support of the import restriction and policies.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- 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 in Canada.
- BC’s beekeeping industry totaled an estimated \$18.8 million in farm receipts in 2020 from the sale of hive products and pollination services. BC bee breeders have also increased their sales of bees and queens to beekeepers in BC and outside the province.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- Advice/Recommendations
- 

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## BEE INSPECTION PROGRAM

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The BC Government's Apiculture Program has delivered free support to BC's beekeepers for over 60 years, including apiary inspections, extension services, education through webinars, courses, seminars and field days, and laboratory diagnostic services.
- When there is an indication of a bee disease anywhere in the province, inspection, extension, and diagnostic services are available to beekeepers.
- In 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries had 12 apiary inspectors in all beekeeping regions of the province:
  - Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands – South
  - Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands – North
  - Powell River & Sunshine Coast
  - Fraser Valley, Metro Vancouver & Pemberton Valley
  - West Kootenays - Boundary
  - East Kootenays
  - South Okanagan
  - North Okanagan & Shuswap
  - Thompson – Cariboo
  - Prince George - Vanderhoof
  - Smithers – Terrace
  - Peace
- B.C. Government apiary inspectors' peak inspection period is from March until July.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Apiculture Program's legislated mandate is to address bee health issues by assisting the beekeeping industry to control diseases and pests and mitigate impacts.
- As of 2019, inspection and extension services have been available to beekeepers in all beekeeping areas of the province.
- Inspection services are complemented with courses and free extension materials
- The Animal Health Centre provides a comprehensive range of diagnostic services for bee diseases and pests at no cost to beekeepers.
- The Apiculture Program carries out annual spring and fall surveys to determine winter losses and production estimates.
- To promote Best Management Practices, the Apiculture Program continues to emphasize the delivery of courses and educational services:
  - The free '*Introduction to Beekeeping*' webinar series has attracted hundreds of participants annually since its introduction in 2015. The format provides an educational opportunity for beekeepers in isolated regions. The February 2022 course has attracted approximately 800 registrants in and outside the province.

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- The Ministry introduced the biennial Bee Master Course in 1955 which is the oldest advanced bee course in North America. The course has been presented in collaboration with UBC. The coronavirus pandemic resulted in the cancellation of Bee Master 2022.
- In 2018, the BC Government announced the BEE BC program in support of local projects addressing bee health issues, with an annual budget of \$100K. The final year of support was 2021.
- In 2021, the BC Government decided to guarantee 3-year funding towards the establishment and implementation of a Tech Transfer Program organized and implemented through the BC Honey Producers Association (BCHPA) with provincial funding support.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

Other western provinces offer different services for apiculture and inspections.

- **Alberta** – In 2019, a Tech Transfer Program was introduced through CAP funding support for at least three years. Apiculture technicians are hired and work directly with producers to improve management techniques.
- **Saskatchewan** - the Provincial Apiarist is primarily involved in the administration of regulations and provision of extension services. Inspections are carried out on a case-by-case basis.
- **Manitoba** – A Tech Transfer Program was introduced in 2020 in collaboration with the University of Manitoba.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The BC Bee Program operates with three FTE's: one Bee Program Manager and 2 FTE equivalents for auxiliary 'as and when' apiary inspectors at the technical enforcement officer (STO 11R) classification.
- Operational expenses for bee inspection average approximately \$35,000 a year.

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**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT – CANADIAN AGRICULTURE PARTNERSHIP (CAP)**

**RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- Business Development programs, funded under the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) Markets and Trade priority, are designed to support Grow BC by expanding food production, local business growth and improving the competitiveness of B.C.'s farmers and processors.
- To support agriculture and food businesses to be successful, the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program provides funding for Business Coaching and Specialized Business Planning. During COVID-19, and recent wildfires and floods, this program was used to help farmers and processors pivot their operations and make informed business decisions to develop an immediate and long-term recovery plan.
- Other Business Development programs include support for:
  - Self-directed online resources such as cost of production by community, how-to-guides and AgriServiceBC webinars,
  - Agri-Skills workshops and training courses to help educate on business management skills and other topics,
  - Knowledge Transfer funding for industry groups to host speakers and learning events on adaption topics, and
  - Research and planning to guide industry to move forward toward sustainable growth and increased competitiveness.
- The CAP Business Development programs are also intended to:
  - Increase the participation of under-represented groups such as indigenous peoples, women, and youth.
  - Increase support for young and new farmers by making supports and programs available for startup businesses; and
  - Increase resiliency and a strong operating environment, and support positive mental health by supporting skill development and strong business management that position B.C. producers and processors for success.

**BACKGROUND:**

- In April 2018, the CAP came into effect with a five-year investment of \$115M in B.C. programs. One of the six priority areas in CAP is Markets and Trade which focuses on opening new markets and helping farmers and food processors improve their competitiveness.
- The CAP Business Development programs include:
  - B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program (BCABPP) for producers and processors to access funding (\$5,000 individual businesses up to \$20,000 for groups) for business consulting services through three streams:
    - Specialized Business Planning to complete strategic, financial, risk, value add, human resource and succession planning.

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- Business Disaster Recovery Planning – expansion of the previous COVID Business Recovery Planning to support those impacted by an external event such a traumatic event that interrupts the normal production or flow of operations and puts the stability of the business at risk. Examples include fire, flood, drought, tornado, disease outbreak, COVID-19, death, or illness.
- Business Plan Coaching (Initiated in 2020/21) to assist new and small farmers in the development of their business plan (access up to \$3,000 in funding).
- As of February 2022, 45 applications were approved for the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program for 2021/22 with a total budget of \$220,000.
- The B.C. Indigenous Agricultural Development Program, funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), provides funding to complete Agriculture Opportunity Assessments, financial and business plans, coaching, and other training to assist Indigenous governments, organizations, and entrepreneurs to succeed in their business endeavors, build their knowledge and make informed decisions. *(See Estimates Note Indigenous Agriculture – Indigenous Agriculture Development Program)*
- Through Agri-Skills workshops and self-directed online resources, the Ministry helps improve business management skills and capacity. Over 2021/22, these included working with industry partners such as Lower Mainland Horticultural Improvement Association (LMHIA), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), Farm Management Canada (FMC), Cariboo Cattlemen’s Association (CCA) etc to deliver training and resources. Projects included:
  - Farm Business Management and Direct Farm Marketing Sessions at the Pacific Agriculture Show (\$35,000 in fiscal FY21/22).
  - Delivered virtual webinars including
    - Cariboo Cattleman/Farm Credit Canada The Transition Process - Empowering your family to be stewards of your land, legacy, and business
    - Farm Management Canada/AFF - AgriShield- comprehensive risk assessment and mitigation platform for Canadian farmers to assess and manage risks on the farm.
  - Development of “Taking Stock for Flood Recovery” guidebook (\$6,480) that includes supporting information and steps to assess and plan for recovery from the personal, biological, environmental, and business impacts that agricultural producers (livestock and crop) will need to deal with after a flood.
- The Knowledge Transfer Events Program provides up to \$5,000 in funding for industry groups to host speakers, field days and other extension activities to improve the adoption of best management practices and address barriers to growth. In 2021/22 the program
  - Approved 24 projects resulting in \$ 93,011.20 in funding support provided.
- Strategic Sector Projects support applied research, strategic planning, and industry capacity building to address competitiveness issues, improve collaboration and

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guide industry as it moves forward to sustainable growth. In 2021/22 projects included:

- Design and system testing of the Towards Income Profits Report which uses AgriStability data to provide a simplified farm financial analysis at no cost to the producer (\$112,000);
- Support B.C.'s first in person and virtual Agriculture and Food Co-operative Association Conference and Trade Show (\$10,000);
- Partnering with AgSafe on Mental Health Shared Cost Agreement to provide access to health and wellness counselling for individuals or families affected by recent flooding and/or traumatic events, and access to peer group sessions facilitated by a registered clinical counsellor.(\$24,500 )
- CAP business development programs support informed decision making and reducing or mitigating risks which, in turn, supports positive mental health, reduces stress and uncertainty. Working together with the Industry Specialists and Regional Agrologists, the farm business staff provide technical advice and guide clients to available programs.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. provides a similar suite of farm business management programs and services to those offered by other provinces.
- Staff participate in Federal-Provincial-Territorial working groups to share information, learn from other jurisdictions, and improve the effectiveness of programs. They also participate in the National Risk Roundtable and CANFAX National Cost of Production Working Group.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information
- Three FTE's (Two Farm Business Specialists and one Program Analyst) from the Indigenous and Entrepreneur Services Unit support the delivery of the CAP Business Development programs.

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## Buy BC – Marketing Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, more British Columbians have taken notice of where their food comes from.
- I'm very proud of the importance British Columbians are placing on local B.C. food and beverage products. This makes a difference to our farmers, fishers and food and beverage processors across the province.
- Now in its fourth year, Buy BC is helping British Columbians choose local and in turn feed the local economy.
- Buy BC makes it easier for British Columbians to identify and enjoy B.C. food and beverage products at grocery stores and farmers' markets.
- Since Buy BC was relaunched in 2018, over 720 B.C. companies have licensed over 2,900 of their food and beverage products to leverage the Buy BC brand to increase sales of their products, and our government is working closely with retailers, such as Safeway and Thrifty Foods, to ensure that consumers can more easily identify local foods through the use of in-store, Buy BC-branded signage.
- The Buy BC Partnership Program continues to provide \$2 million in funding per year and access to a free Buy BC logo to support industry-led marketing campaigns.
- We will continue to work together with farmers and food processors to build a stronger B.C. and ensure British Columbians can identify and access the amazing local foods that are grown, harvested, raised, and processed close to home.

### BACKGROUND:

- Buy BC programming is focused on three strategic areas:
  - Increasing the availability of B.C. food and beverage products at grocery stores, farmers' markets, and food service establishments;
  - Motivating consumers to purchase B.C. products over other alternatives; and,
  - Triggering consumers to purchase B.C. products when shopping and dining out across the province.
- Key Accomplishments for Buy BC in 2021/22:
  - Delivered two province-wide **advertising campaigns** in collaboration with GCPE highlighting the people behind B.C.'s agriculture, food and fish sector (first campaign featuring TV, digital and transit ads was in market from July to August 2021; second campaign featuring TV, digital and print ads was in market January to February 2022). Campaign results are still outstanding.
  - Funded 69 industry-led local marketing projects and licensed 143 applicants to use the Buy BC logo through the **Buy BC Partnership Program**. Since the program launch in 2018, a total of 246 projects have been funded and over 720

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applicants licensed. The Buy BC funding has created new opportunities for applicants including:

- Kindred Cultures Inc. from Vancouver, who have successfully funded product demos in new markets such as Vancouver Island and have seen a 30% increase in sales since launching Buy BC cost-sharing activities.
- Kaslo Sourdough from Kaslo, who has seen increased website traffic and direct online sales, in addition to improved brand awareness and social media following since investing in Buy BC activities.
- Twin Maples Produce Ltd. from Chilliwack, who indicates that Buy BC has been instrumental in increasing sales through their online store for home delivery.
- **Partnered with Sobeys** on a Buy BC Produce Display Campaign featuring B.C. produce in 67 Thrifty and Safeway grocery stores across the province; and distributed over 8,700 Buy BC signs to Thrifty and Safeway grocery stores to increase visibility and sales of BC products.
- Delivered a month-long **Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL campaign** in partnership with the BC Restaurant and Food Services Association (BCRFA), promoting 40 chefs and restaurants on Buy BC social media channels and the Buy BC website.
- Partnered with the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) for the second year of the **Buy BC: Journey of B.C. Food Exhibit** to enhance food knowledge among B.C. urban consumers. The Exhibit showcased farm-to-table journeys of eight B.C. commodities and was visited by over 119,500 fair attendees.
- Produced two **Buy BC videos** highlighting people behind B.C. food, including one video featuring B.C.'s tree fruit sector in support of the Tree Fruit Stabilization Project and one video featuring indigenous chefs and producers.
- Partnered with **BC Fairs and BC Agriculture in the Classroom** to promote Buy BC brand through a range of consumer engagement activities across B.C.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- \$3.75M of base budget is committed to all Buy BC programming in FY 2022/23, including \$2M in cost-shared funding through the Buy BC Partnership Program and \$1.75M for government-led advertising/promotions and industry partnership activities.

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## Buy BC – Farmers’ Markets and COVID-19

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Farmers’ markets (FMs) across B.C. have been an integral part of our provincial food security for many years.
- They are venues to learn about fresh, local, in season foods and they serve as springboards for local farmers to introduce their products to new audiences.
- They are places to connect with friends, family and neighbors and celebrate the uniqueness of each community and region.
- Through the pandemic and extreme weather events the province has seen over the past two years, the importance of local food has never been greater.
- The past two summers, FMs have had a difficult task due to the pandemic. But markets were quick to adapt and continued to implement physical distancing measures and protocols to ensure the safety of vendors, organizers, and customers.
- On behalf of the Government of British Columbia, I want to say – thank you!
- You quickly adapted to ensure you could continue to serve your communities, and many markets went digital as well.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, our Ministry has worked in partnership with the BC Association of Farmers’ Markets (BCAFM) to support over 70 farmers’ markets to move online, generating nearly \$4 million in online sales through this initiative.
- This past year, we also worked with BCAFM to help markets come back stronger from their pre-pandemic operating levels and set a stronger foundation for future growth and long-term success through a new, one-time \$475,000 BC Farmers Market Expansion Program.
- Funded through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership, this new program is helping over 55 farmers’ markets across B.C. purchase signage, equipment, and infrastructure to enable them to expand local sales and operate safely during emergencies so British Columbians can access the foods they count on.

### BACKGROUND:

- BCAFM had 135 member FMs operating throughout 2020 and 2021 (slightly lower than usual due to COVID-19 but expected to rise again in 2022). Operating revenues of FMs – which rely primarily on vendor booth fees – have decreased due to vendor selling restrictions, market layout restrictions reducing the overall number of vendors, and the extra work required to modify and manage markets in response to COVID-19.
- **B.C. Farmers’ Markets Online Platform:**
  - To mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) provided \$55,000 to BCAFM over two years to help member farmers’ markets transition to the B.C. Farmers’ Markets Online platform (\$31k in

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2020/21 and \$24k in 2021/22). Over two years, FMs have generated over \$2.5 million sales in 2020 and \$1.4 million in sales in 2021.

- **B.C. Farmers’ Market Expansion Program:**
  - This new program will greatly increase the capacity of markets to expand local food/beverage sales and operate during emergencies to ensure communities throughout B.C. have continued access to food. The one-time, cost-shared, reimbursement-based program is providing \$475k (funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program), with up to \$15k available for more than 55 projects at B.C. FMs. The new program has recently closed (in Jan. 2022), and projects are currently being approved.
  - Program funding can be used for:
    - signs and merchandising, including promotional, directional or COVID-19 specific signs, merchandising racks and display stands for promotional materials;
    - storage and transportation, including secured storage, dry storage and cold storage facilities, and shelving for storage units, as well as trailers and shipping containers required to move equipment, signs and infrastructure; and,
    - power and operations, including power-supply systems, tents, tent weights, tables, chairs, barricades, walkie-talkies, public-address systems, temporary staging, lights, heaters, misters and generators.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations
  - Individual FMs are also eligible to apply for up to \$10k in 50/50 cost-shared funding through the Buy BC Partnership Program annually to support local marketing campaigns aimed at increasing the demand and sales of B.C. agriculture, food and beverage products within B.C.

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## Cannabis – Legalization of Cannabis and Agriculture

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In July 2018 and in anticipation of Federal legalization of non-medical cannabis, AFF announced a policy framework regarding cannabis production on land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- This decision allowed regional governments to align cannabis production in the ALR with local planning and community priorities.
- This regulatory change ensured local and First Nations governments had the authority to prohibit new cement-based cannabis-production facilities on ALR land within their communities, while clarifying that cannabis production in the ALR **cannot** be prohibited if grown lawfully:
  - In an open field; in a structure that has a base consisting entirely of soil; in a structure that was either fully constructed or under construction, with required permits in place, prior to July 13, 2018; or in a structure existing as of July 13, 2018, that was constructed for the purpose of growing crops inside it.
- This policy remains in effect today and has only received minor amendments such as an update that includes terminology to recognize all forms of cannabis production as ‘farm-use’, implying that cannabis production in the ALR does not contravene the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, even if engaged in without the Commission’s approval.
- AFF-staff are currently working to update their Minister Bylaw Standards for Cannabis Production in the ALR and anticipates that these works will be completed by late 2022. This work will provide enhanced guidance for local governments as they develop bylaws pertaining to licensed cannabis production on the ALR in their jurisdictions.
- AFF continues to support the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) in their on-going development of a Provincial framework for direct delivery and farm-gate sales of cannabis; and have indicated where such initiatives should seek to align themselves with the *Agricultural Land Use Regulations* and other AFF policies.

### BACKGROUND:

- The *Cannabis Act*, as administered by Health Canada,
  - Legalizes and regulates non-medical cannabis;
  - Continues the existing medical cannabis regulatory framework to non-medical cannabis production, *Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulation (ACMPR)*, for at least the next five years; and
  - Updates and incorporates the *Industrial Hemp Regulations*.
- The *Cannabis Act* gives the Federal government authority to regulate cannabis production, including licensing of producers, establishing product standards, and related inspection authority.

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- The *Cannabis Act* gives the provincial and territorial governments authority to regulate the distribution and retail of non-medical cannabis. In B.C., this is administered by the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB), and Liquor and Cannabis Regulatory Branch (LCRB).
- In B.C., the Cannabis Legalization and Regulation Secretariat (the Cannabis Secretariat) of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) leads the development of the provincial non-medical cannabis framework and is the central coordinating body for non-medical cannabis policy across the provincial government.

CANNABIS AND THE AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE (ALR)

- Within B.C., both Provincial and local governments can regulate land use, including agricultural land. Local governments regulate land use through their powers for community planning and zoning bylaws.
- The Medical Marihuana Access Regulations (MMAR) was the first regulation enacted with respect to medical cannabis in Canada. Producers of medical cannabis could be designated under MMAR and were loosely regulated.
- The Marihuana for Medical Purposes Regulations (MMPR) repealed and replaced the MMAR in 2013. The MMPR introduced a new class of licenses, known as Commercial Grower Licenses. Federal requirements for licensing under the MMPR required producers to have substantial infrastructure, resulting in a sizable land footprint.
- In 2015 MMPR medical cannabis production was designated as a farm use under the Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation and established that local governments in B.C. could not prohibit medical cannabis production within community boundaries if the cannabis production facility was located in the ALR.
- A Federal Court of Canada ruling in 2016 found that the MMPR was unconstitutional and that some MMAR licenses issued to producers were still in effect and had no expiry date until the Court orders otherwise.
- The Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR) repealed the MMPR in 2016. The ACMPR was enacted under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. The ACMPR carried forward both the MMPR facility standards and the loosely regulated designated producer licenses issued under the MMAR.
- In July 2018, an amendment was made to the Agricultural Land Reserve, Use Subdivision and Procedure Regulation which prevented Local and First Nations governments from prohibiting of cannabis production on the ALR under the following circumstances:
  - In an open field;
  - In a structure with a base consisting entirely of soil;
  - In a pre-existing structure for the purpose of growing crops inside it; or
  - In a structure that was under construction prior to the amendment.
- As of December 31, 2021, there were 184 cannabis production licenses granted by Health Canada in B.C., of which 71 are located on the ALR in the Province.

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CANNABIS AND FARM GATE SALES AND DIRECT DELIVERY

- The Cannabis Secretariat is leading the development of the direct delivery and farm-gate programs for launch in late 2022 and have delegated these tasks to the LDB and LCRB, respectfully.
- For the farm-gate program, the Province is pursuing an application approach, that would require Local Government approval, that would allow licensed producers to establish a retail-store on the same property that they are authorized to grow cannabis. Processors are currently excluded from this program.
- For direct delivery, the program will allow small-scale cannabis producers to deliver products directly to local retailers and circumvent the LDB's current distribution process.
- The Cannabis Secretariat heard from small-scale producers that direct delivery to retailers is important because it will allow them to develop customer brand recognition as their products can be more consistently presented by the retailers they choose to work with.
- The Cannabis Secretariat, LDB, and LCRB is engaging with Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) staff to support the development of these programs as it relates to impacts on the cannabis industry from an agricultural perspective and any potential impacts to agricultural land.

INDIGENOUS SHELF SPACE PROGRAM AND SECTION 119 AGREEMENTS

- PSSG has recently announced the opening of their Indigenous Shelf Space Program (ISSP). This program will highlight B.C. Indigenous-produced cannabis products in B.C. Cannabis Stores and through the B.C. Cannabis Stores online site, where non-indigenous producers are held to much more strict marketing-regulations under the *Cannabis Act*.
- The program launched in January 2022 and will help consumers easily identify Indigenous products while making purchasing decisions, and stand-out amongst other cannabis products.
- PSSG has developed 'special' agreements with several Indigenous groups in B.C. that are interested in pursuing or are continuing cannabis production, processing, and retail in the legal framework. These are termed 'Section 119' agreements, and allow indigenous-operators special rights and privileges, such as the ability to vertically integrate cannabis-related businesses, as well as the ability to access the direct-delivery and farm-gate sale initiatives in advance of the actual policy being implemented.
  - This is in an attempt to steer Indigenous groups in B.C. away from conducting business with or in the illicit cannabis sector, and to attract more to transition into the legal framework, as well as to attract third-party investment to Indigenous communities.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- The Cannabis Legalization Secretariat is responsible for monitoring how other jurisdictions in Canada are implementing cannabis regulations and legislation.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- See Estimate Note 'Cannabis – Ministry Support Programs'.
- Advice/Recommendations

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## Cannabis – Ministry Support Programs

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- After the legalization of non-medical cannabis (cannabis) by the Federal government in October of 2018, The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries (AFF) recognized cannabis as an agricultural commodity.
- AFF acknowledges the importance of the cannabis sector to B.C.'s economy, and has supported its partner Ministries, such as the Cannabis Legalization Secretariat, in developing initiatives to strengthen the cannabis sector in the province.
- AFF has also individually committed funding and services to support the transitioning of cannabis producers into the new legal framework.
- Licensed cannabis producers are eligible to apply for programming under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). In B.C., licensed cannabis producers are eligible for some, but not all CAP-funded initiatives and programs.
- AFF will continue to develop supports and services for licensed cannabis producers and will also continue to work with partner Ministries, and within the Federal regulations of the *Cannabis Act* to improve the overall competitiveness of the sector.

### BACKGROUND:

- As of December 31, 2021, there were 184 cannabis production licenses granted by Health Canada in B.C., of which; 67 were micro-cultivation licenses, 104 were standard-cultivation licenses, and 14 were nursery licenses.
  - Micro-Cultivation licensees can only utilize up to 200m<sup>2</sup> of floor-space for cannabis production, whereas standard-cultivators have no production limit.
  - 71 out of the above 184 licensed cannabis producers are located on the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in the province.
- There are nearly 400 non-medical cannabis, private retail licenses (legal storefronts) operating in B.C., with over 50 applications for retail-licenses still in que with the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) for approval.
- The LDB reported that cannabis retail sales more than doubled between the fiscals of 19/20 to 20/21, increasing from \$191 million to \$327 million, and sales continuing to exceed \$400 million for 2021 in the Province.
- The total farm-cash receipt value in 2021 for the production of cannabis seeds, vegetative plants, and flowering heads from B.C. producers was \$326 million; almost equivalent to the farm-cash receipt value of \$328 million for greenhouse vegetable production in the province.
- In 2021, the legal cannabis sector provided 2,235 jobs for British Columbians; 2, 275 jobs in 2020; and 2,262 jobs in 2019. 185 jobs were hired into the legal cannabis sector in January of 2022 in the province.

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- The 'black' market of cannabis production and retail still remains in the province, with thousands of producers still growing and selling cannabis illicitly.
  - The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General's Office (PSSG) Community Safety Unit (CSU) has confirmed over 175 illicit cannabis retail stores have closed since legalization in 2018, and the CSU has issued over \$1.2 million in penalties.
- The Cannabis Legalization Secretariat (CLS) of PSSG leads the development of the provincial non-medical cannabis framework and is the central coordinating body for non-medical cannabis policy across the provincial government.
  - The CLS is currently developing the policy framework to be enacted in late 2022 for the direct-delivery, and farm-gate sale of legal-market cannabis.
    - AFF-staff are engaged in supporting the development of these initiatives and have provided input where changes may interact with Agricultural Land Use Regulations and other AFF jurisdictional policy.
- Under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) that came into effect on April 1, 2018, Minister Eby, Minister Farnworth, and Minister Donaldson concluded that some, but not all of AFF programs would be available to the cannabis industry.
- Based on this direction, AFF staff have continued to work through the eligibility of cannabis under CAP.
- In addition to this, AFF has funded and supported the following initiatives related to cannabis in the 20/21 fiscal:
  - \$70K was allocated for the 'Legal Market Entry Project' for fiscal 2020/2021 from CAP Market Development Funding.
    - \$49,942 for the 20/21 fiscal was budgeted for delivery of the 'Cannabis Micro-Cultivation Guide'. This project enhanced the technical resources available to support the transition of illicit cannabis producers into the legal sector in B.C. and was advocated for by stakeholder groups. Project was completed in June of 2021 and is available on the Province's 'Cannabis Regulator Navigator' website.
    - \$3,780 for the 20/21 fiscal was budgeted to support a video project under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between AFF and JERI to highlight the value-added benefits of legal-market cannabis. This video is available on the Province's 'Cannabis Regulatory Navigator' website.
  - \$44,910 for the 2020/2021 fiscal was budgeted for the *'Relative Impact of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) Emissions from Agriculture on Air Quality of Urban Centers'* study administered by AFF's Resource Management Unit (RMU). This work was completed on March 15, 2021. See Estimate Note 'Cannabis - Normal Farm Practices and Odour Complaints'.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Federal (AAFC): Funding provided to cannabis projects through CAP and federal-only programs (i.e., non-CAP). Applicants must have all requisite eligibility criteria, and licenses from Health Canada, and be in compliance with all applicable legislation and regulations.

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- Ontario: Legal cannabis production/processing/value-add activities are eligible for some CAP funding and programming.
- Manitoba: Cannabis projects are eligible to receive funding under CAP.
- Newfoundland: Cannabis projects are not eligible for CAP funding.
- New Brunswick: Cannabis projects are not eligible for CAP funding.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- 0.5 FTE, Industry Specialist from the Industry Development Unit is allocated to manage the Cannabis file for fiscal 21/22; receiving support from the Resource Management and Land Use/Geospatial Units.
- AFF’s Land Use and Geospatial Unit will update its ‘Minister Bylaw Standard (MBS) for Cannabis Production in the ALR’ to be completed in late 2022.
  - This project will utilize 0.2 Land-use Planner and 0.2 Industry Specialist FTE’s.
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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## **Cannabis – Normal Farm Practices and Odour Complaints**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries (AFF) recognizes that residential property owners living near commercial cannabis operations have been aggrieved by odours arising from some of these businesses.
- Other agricultural operations in B.C. may also cause some disturbances such as odour, noise, and dust. With the close proximity between farms and urban areas, there is a greater potential for complaints regarding farm operations and practices.
- AFF further acknowledges that Federally licensed-cannabis producers have implemented odour control technologies and mitigation strategies to address these concerns, as is already required of them by Health Canada in order to obtain a cultivation license.
- Health Canada remains the regulatory-body that audits and inspects licensed cannabis producers so that their heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) are functioning to an agreed upon standard prior to, and after receiving their license.
- B.C. residents aggrieved by odour, noise, dust, or other disturbances resulting from a licensed cannabis operation may file a complaint with Health Canada.
- AFF acknowledges Metro-Vancouver and their delegated authority under the *Environmental Management Act* to reduce the proliferation of air-pollutants within their region, and their desire to implement their proposed '*Cannabis Production and Processing Air-Emissions Management Bylaw*' under this authority.
- AFF-staff are working closely with both Metro-Vancouver officials and cannabis industry representatives to achieve a mutual agreement on the aforementioned issue.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Non-medical cannabis (cannabis) was legalized by the Federal government on October 17, 2018. Health Canada is the Federal department that regulates cannabis production and processing across Canada.
- Prior to, and just following legalization, both the indoor (concrete structures) and greenhouse (glass structures) production of cannabis increased in B.C., particularly in the Lower Mainland and Metro-Vancouver areas. Most producers moved into pre-existing greenhouses that were previously used for floriculture or vegetable crops, and further retro-fitted these structures to adhere to Health Canada licensing requirements for cannabis production, such as HVAC standards.
- This shift led to a number of new complaints arising from the public; particularly from residents living near these facilities, regarding the perceived odour, noise and light pollution arising from some of these operations. Many of the concerns are primarily attributed to the retro-fitted greenhouse operations, as they were not originally designed to reduce odour from cannabis production.

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- In some cases, where nuisance odour is being associated with licensed cannabis facilities; the odour may actually be arising from nearby cannabis producers authorized under the 'Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR). These producers were not required to implement air-filtration technologies or mitigation strategies in their operations. It is also currently unclear as to what or how regulations may apply to the outdoor, licensed production of cannabis in regard to odour.
- Further, since legalization, the number of large-scale, indoor producers of commercial cannabis greatly declined in the Metro-Vancouver region; with only 4 to 5 remaining.
- The Federal Cannabis Regulations addresses odour control under section 85(1) – Filtration of Air and states:<sup>Copyright</sup>
  - Prior to obtaining a cannabis production license, applicants need to demonstrate to Health Canada that they have an effective air filtration system in operation that would comply with the requirements under section 85(1).
  - If odour is present outside of a licensed facility, Health Canada inspectors may inspect the air filtration system
  - If Health Canada conducts an inspection whether routine, or due to a complaint, and the air-filtration system is found to be functioning within regulatory guidelines, Health Canada will take no action against the producer. If an air-filtration system is found to be not functioning to standard, or requires maintenance, Health Canada may issue a 'cease and desist' order against the producer, until the equipment is functioning properly and inspected as such again.
- Since legalization, many cannabis producers operating on land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) have been the subject of complaints to the BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB). The complaints associated with all of these operations have been settled or withdrawn.
  - A formal hearing was scheduled for March 9 to 13, 2020, for the complaints against a Canopy Growth facility located in Langley, B.C., however this hearing was cancelled after the company closed down the operation.
  - Several AFF-staff were identified as key-persons to participate in this hearing, to where a 'Key-Persons' report was compiled by these staff on behalf of BCFIRB, but never utilized. AFF has since obtained this report in anticipation of future developments on the issue.
- The Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) has delegated authority under the *Environmental Management Act* (EMA) to manage air quality in their region.
  - In May 2019, MVRD published a Proposed Emission Regulation (Regulation) for Cannabis Production and Processing Operations Discussion Paper, which summarizes the regulatory authority MVRD may have to reduce odour from cannabis production, if the odours are defined as air-contaminates, or 'volatile-organic-compound' (VOCs) emissions.

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- MVRD completed phase one of their consultation at the end of October 2019. In response, the Cannabis Secretariat in the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) coordinated an official response from the Ministries of PSSG, AFF, ENV and JERI. AFF stated in this letter the concern that if the Regulation is implemented, it could be applied to regulate odour from other agricultural sectors in B.C., including the greenhouse vegetable, swine, poultry, and dairy industries.
- To better understand the emission of VOCs from farming operations and their impact on air quality and the best-available control technologies currently used to mitigate cannabis odour, AFF funded an RFP on this topic.
- \$44,910 for the 2020/2021 fiscal was budgeted for the '*Relative Impact of VOC Emissions from Agriculture on Air Quality of Urban Centers*' study to be administered by AFF's Resource Management Unit (RMU).
  - These works were completed in June of 2021, and Metro Vancouver staff were invited to review a draft of this study prior to its release, for consideration in relation to their 'Proposed Emission Regulation on Cannabis Production and Processing Operations.'
  - This work remains posted online on RMU's website, and was well-received by industry, as it provided a third-party study on the ability of cannabis VOC's to contribute to the air-quality in the Metro-Vancouver region.
- MVRD staff managing the proposed Regulation, AFF-staff, and staff from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change meet on a monthly basis to discuss developments regarding the issue.
- MVRD has recently concluded their second round of formal government, public, and industry consultation and is seeking feedback on the issue, to where AFF staff facilitated and supported MVRD conversations with the Cannabis Cultivators Association of B.C., and individual cannabis producers.
- Cannabis cultivators, B.C. Greenhouse Growers, and the Metro-Vancouver Agricultural Council have all issued their general non-support, and dismay regarding the intended bylaw.
- The need to develop Normal Farm Practices (NFPs) for the cannabis industry is still apparent and desired by industry, stakeholder-groups, and local governments.
  - Industry stakeholders and producers have recently advocated for working with the Provincial Government, and Local Governments to collaborate on the establishment of NFPs in regard to standardizing odour-control technologies in the production of indoor cannabis, however the outcome of whether or not Metro-Vancouver will proceed with their bylaw is still unknown.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- No other jurisdiction or Local Government in Canada has implemented any guidelines or measures for cannabis facilities to utilize in mitigating odour, noise, and light from their operations.
- Ontario and Alberta have experienced similar concerns from members of the public on odour from cannabis facilities.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- This issue receives support from 0.3 FTE Industry Specialist from the Industry Development Unit, and 0.2 FTE Environmental Engineer from the Resource Management Unit, under the Extension and Support Services Branch (ESSB), Agricultural Resource Division (ARD).
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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## CleanBC Roadmap To 2030

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- B.C. is a leader in climate action. The CleanBC Roadmap To 2030 presents an opportunity to leverage and build on this strong foundation.
- The Roadmap To 2030 includes a pathway for Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, that includes actions to reduce greenhouse gases, increase carbon sequestration on agricultural lands, and increase renewable natural gas production through anaerobic digestion.
- Budget 2022 provides funding to support the implementation of these actions, starting with research and monitoring to fill in critical knowledge gaps, and developing programs to support adoption of promising practices by farmers, ranchers, and the aquaculture sector.

### BACKGROUND:

- The agriculture sector directly accounts for just under 4 percent of B.C.'s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The largest source is enteric fermentation, a digestive process of cattle that produces methane. The next largest sources are on-farm energy, agricultural soils and manure management.
- The CleanBC Roadmap To 2030 is the province's plan to achieve a 40 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and an 80 percent reduction by 2050, as legislated under the *Climate Change Accountability Act*. There is no specific target for agricultural emissions, but the sector is expected to contribute to meeting the targets.
- The pathway for Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries includes action in five areas:
  1. supporting GHG efficient farm practices, such as fuel switching and manure management
  2. enhancing carbon sequestration on agricultural lands soils, such as through rotational grazing and cover cropping
  3. realizing the potential of regenerative agriculture
  4. exploring the potential for seaweed aquaculture to sequester carbon; and
  5. supporting increased renewable natural gas through anaerobic digestion.
- Budget 2022 provides funding to support the implementation of these actions.
- Recognizing that the sectors are in the "emergent" stage of moving towards the net-zero emissions economy, actions will start with research and monitoring to fill in critical knowledge gaps and developing programs to support adoption of promising practices by farmers, ranchers, and the aquaculture sector.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. is a leader in climate action. The CleanBC Roadmap To 2030 presents an opportunity to leverage and build on this strong foundation.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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## Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) is working with other ministries to support the implementation of CleanBC.
- The CleanBC Plan commits government to develop a Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS) in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.
- AFF has three Phase 1 actions under CPAS for 2021/22 completion, related to agricultural water infrastructure, agricultural weather monitoring, and ocean acidification.
- AFF's CPAS actions build on the existing programs of the federal-provincial Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). AFF continues to support climate change adaptation as well as climate change mitigation through these CAP programs.
- Under CAP, AFF is currently working with its new (as of January 2022) delivery agent for the Climate Change Adaptation Program to improve efficiencies in program administration, relative to how the program worked under the previous delivery agent.
- There are no changes to the planned work or budget of the Climate Change Adaptation Program, associated with the changes in program administration.

### BACKGROUND:

- Adapting to climate change is a priority for the agriculture sector, and B.C. farmers face unique challenges due to diverse geographies and commodities. For B.C. producers, climate change implications include:
  - Increased management complexity;
  - Business costs; and
  - Uncertainty due to impacts from climate related risks such as wildfire, drought, flooding, pests, and diseases.
- Climate change also creates opportunities for the sector in terms of an increase in growing days and opportunities for new crops.
- Successful adaptation is required for industry to manage risks, realize opportunities, and ensure long-term food supply security.

#### Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy

- AFF participated in inter-agency work to develop the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS), released in 2021.
- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV), Climate Action Secretariat (CAS) released CPAS in a two-phase approach. CPAS Phase 1 (2021/22) includes actions focused on program development and scoping, in preparation for the full CPAS 2022/25 plan (expected release in Spring 2022), comprising actions for 2022-2025.
- AFF has three Phase 1 actions for 2021/22 completion.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- \$0.310M - Investing in water infrastructure: to scope, assess and develop an agricultural water infrastructure program.
- \$0.100M - Enhancement of the provincial agricultural weather monitoring network to assist producers with on-farm decision making.
- \$0.155M - B.C. aquaculture and fisheries climate risk needs assessment: conduct a needs assessment and develop an action plan to address climate risks and vulnerabilities, including ocean acidification.
- Through the Climate Action Secretariat of ENV, AFF contributed to an omnibus inter-agency Treasury Board Submission, seeking funding to implement CPAS actions. Priority action areas for AFF include water infrastructure and on-farm adaptation action to build resilience to climate risks such as wildfire, drought, flooding, and extreme heat. Ocean acidification is also a priority area.

**Canadian Agricultural Partnership (2018 to 2023)**

- AFF is providing approximately \$6.5M through CAP to fund the Climate Change Adaptation Program. Two subprograms are included:
  - Regional Adaptation Program – the development of regional specific adaptation plans and projects to support local needs (\$5.1M). Implementation is currently underway in Delta, Fraser Valley, Cariboo, Okanagan, Peace, Kootenay & Boundary, Bulkley-Nechako & Fraser-Fort George, and Vancouver Island.
  - Farm Adaptation Innovator Program (FAIP) is investing \$1.4M in 12 collaborative on-farm applied adaptation research projects. Several FAIP projects involve practices with co-benefits related to greenhouse gas reduction and carbon sequestration, such as investigating enhancement of soil carbon sinks.
  - Work includes wildfire planning and preparedness workshops across the province.
- Program administration changes are happening with the Climate Change Adaptation Program
  - The Ministry started a contract with Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) in January 2022 to replace AFF's previous contract with B.C. Agricultural Research and Development Corporation (ARDCorp), to deliver the program.
  - IAF is currently improving efficiencies in program administration relative to how the program worked under ARDCorp, by bringing program administration functions in-house.
  - IAF has recently advised some of their existing sub-contractors associated with the Climate & Agriculture Initiative BC (CAI) brand, that they would no longer be renewing their contract past March 31, 2022.
  - IAF and AFF are currently managing producer and stakeholder expectations to ensure awareness that the program will continue to be fully supported going into the future.
  - This shift in delivery will reduce administration costs and ensure that AFF gets appropriate recognition for the program's activities.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- AFF is providing approximately \$11.5M through CAP to the interrelated programs, Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and Beneficial Management Practices (BMP).
  - EFP (\$5.0M) provides farm and ranch operators with the means to identify agri environmental risks and opportunities, including opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
  - BMP (\$6.5M) provides cost-share funding to mitigate the farmer's greatest risks to the environment, while achieving co-benefits of climate adaptation and considering legislative requirements. AFF invested \$1.9M in FY 2020/21 in addition to the CAP funding, resulting in 375 on-farm BMPs being adopted in 2020/21 that helped fund improve energy efficiency and grazing management plans (i.e., mitigation), irrigation management plans and projects (i.e., adaptation), etc.
- AFF is providing approximately \$5.5M through CAP to Strategic Initiatives.
  - 11 projects per year support climate change adaptation in the last two years (\$0.4 to 0.5M per year), e.g., weather station upgrades, water conservation outreach and education, support to ranchers for forage and water resiliency.
  - 6 projects per year support climate change mitigation in the last two years (\$0.1 to \$0.2M per year), e.g., In 2021/22, the program completed a \$70,000 project that assessed the potential for agricultural GHG reduction and enhancement of carbon sinks was completed. This work informed the development of the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030.
  - 6 to 10 projects per year support both adaptation and mitigation in the last two years (\$0.1 to \$0.2M per year), e.g., on-farm demonstrations of soil health research in Interior forage systems.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- AFF's Climate Change Adaptation Program is acknowledged as a leading program in Canada with respect to climate adaptation programming for agriculture.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

- \$0.565M of provincial funding for AFF's three CPAS actions for 2021/22.
- \$23.5M of federal-provincial funding for AFF's activities under CAP (2018 to 2023).

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

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- With an agriculture sector as vast as British Columbia, with over 200 commodities – 100 seafood commodities – 15 billion dollar sector contributing to our economy – we couldn't have imagined how COVID-19 would impact our producers, processors, farmers, ranchers, fisherman and retailers.
- When the effects of the COVID-19 took hold of the economy in March 2020, we immediately pivoted our staff to gather intel and engage in comprehensive stakeholder outreach.
- We restructured so that our DM and Minister was updated daily on what was transpiring within the sector down to the detail of each commodity group.
- The unprecedented impact and subsequent ripple effect has shone a light on British Columbia's food security and sovereignty overall as well as questioned the resiliency of our supply chains – and the fragility of the industry in BC and across Canada when faced with labour shortages.
- Compounding issues in certain industries, such as unusual weather patterns affecting horticulture crops (such as treefruit, brassica and potato crops) as well as food supply-chains that are overly dependent on the labour force and movement of inputs (such as livestock production and dairy) demanded our immediate mobilization and attention to mitigative strategies.
- While vast, our agriculture sector is also a tightly knit community. Among the challenges we also saw incredible collaboration, generosity and a breaking down of usual barriers among

competing industries – such as the generous donations of canned goods from our Aquaculture industry to people in need; and the redirection of milk products destined to be discarded to our artisan cheese producers.

- The challenges and victories we've seen emerge throughout the COVID-19 pandemic have been inspiring to the staff of the Provincial Ministry, as we have all banded together to alleviate the stressors and collaborate on solutions and strategies for prevention in the future

## How BC is ensuring supply, production, movement and stability of our food system



### Ensuring Access to Labour

Continued access to temporary foreign workers; targeted recruitment plans for domestic workforce.



### Keeping Supplies Moving

Worked with Industry to prevent supply-chain disruptions



### Ensuring Worker and Animal Safety

Established policy, supports, supplies and pathfinding solutions.



### Increasing Sector Capacity to Respond

Providing targeted support for industry through business planning, recovery, and resources.



### Awareness of Employment Opportunities

B.C. Farm, Fish & Food Job Connector and marketing campaign.



- Our areas of focus in our response effort, thematically, became clear to us early on and we acted on what we heard by launching programming as quickly as possible.
- We pulled the retailers together, hosting calls to determine where the stumbling blocks were. We integrated ourselves operationally to move products to distributors and we helped to make connections between primary production and processing. To support the sector, the Ministry created a new **BC Food Product Notification Tool** to share product information with different market channels – retail, contracted food services, institutional food services, distributors, community food providers, food processing, etc. – to help connect products with potential new buyers.
- Through our Buy BC Program, we worked with BC Farmers’ Markets to launch a new online platform to encourage consumers to support local producers. We provided \$55,000 to cover fees for individual farmers markets to join a new online platform and set up their digital market store presence. Each participating farmers market will create its own virtual market store to best serve its communities.
- We launched the BC Food Hub network by supporting a series of regional Food Hubs, including the pilot and demonstration Food Hub in Vancouver and Food Hubs in Port Alberni, Surrey, Quesnel, and Salmon Arm.

- We ensured worker safety by working with the BC Food and Beverage Association to launch the “Protecting our People” program – to purchase large volumes of PPE supplies and distribute those supplies to the sector.
- We worked to increase the resiliency of the sector and their capacity to respond by encouraging the domestic labour force displaced by Provincial Health Office closures to consider employment in the agriculture sector by launching the Farm, Fish and Food Job Connector and marketing campaign
- We launched the Small Farm Business Acceleration Pilot Program pilot program which supports-cost-shared purchasing of commercial farm infrastructure and equipment needed to accelerate the revenue growth of farm businesses. Small and new farm businesses can make investments necessary to achieve farm income growth goals, ensure commercial viability and strengthen financial sustainability.
- We launched the B.C. Lean for Food Processors Program which supports specialized business skill development to enable processors to make more informed decisions, optimize operating procedures, improve production capacity, labour productivity and strengthen their business.
- We launched the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program to pilot a new Business Plan Coaching stream to support B.C.'s agricultural entrepreneurs to further develop their **business plan** and **improve business management skills**.
- We launched a COVID-19 awareness course for fruit pickers and those workers who stay in a designated campsite in BC to complete and keep as proof to show their employers.
- We updated our Meat Inspection Regulation to allow Class D licences in rural areas. Class D licence holders are permitted to conduct on-farm slaughter of up to 25 animal units for direct sale to consumers or retail outlets like restaurants and meat shops in the region where the meat was slaughtered.
- We created the **E-Commerce Program** - to help farmers and food processors adopt e-commerce tools that enhance direct-to-consumer sales providing up to **\$5,000 per applicant** on a first-come, first-served basis.
- We worked with our Provincial Health Office to produce agriculture specific guidance documents to inform industrial work camps, agritourism venues, u-pick operations, farm stands, seafood operations and farmers markets.

## INCREASED BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

- \$15 million for AgriRecovery Initiatives was proactively secured
- AgriStability service levels and coverage levels were enhanced so that timely and adequate cash flow support was available for producers
- Established B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program.
- \$15 million Initiative to assist animal care facilities, such as the Vancouver Aquarium and BC SPCA, impacted by COVID-19 operational restrictions.
- Production Insurance operations moved to an offsite delivery model in two days of the COVID-19 restrictions being implemented.



- The AgriRecovery framework, as the go-to for unprecedented challenges such as COVID-19, became a clear focus for our recovery effort.
- \$15 million for AgriRecovery Initiatives was proactively secured to enable timely support to limit producer COVID-19 losses or help them recover.
  - Extensive BRM Stakeholder engagement was undertaken to identify emerging gaps through industry leadership relationships, BC RMAC and existing BRM Commodity Advisory groups.
- AgriStability service levels and coverage levels were enhanced so that it could provide timely and adequate cash flow needed by producers as a result of COVID-19 impacts.
  - 20% increase in participation was achieved through over 1,000 staff calls to farmers who did not participate in AgriStability.
  - Enrolment deadline was extended from April 30, 2020 to July 3, 2020.
  - Advance payment rate was increased from 50% to 75%.
    - \$4.5 million in advances were paid to 22 farms.
    - Administrative changes ensured fast two-week turnaround time

for payments.

- AGRI established 2019 and 2020 B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program.
  - B.C.'s compensation rate was increased from 70% to 80% and coverage equity was improved by removal of the Reference Margin Limit.
- \$15 million Initiative to assist animal care facilities, such as the Vancouver Aquarium and BC SPCA, impacted by COVID-19 operational restrictions.
  - The Program was operational within 3 days of Treasury Board approvals; \$4.2 million paid during April 15 to June 30, 2020 coverage period.
- Production Insurance operations moved to an offsite delivery model in two days of the COVID-19 restrictions being implemented.
  - Over 2,500 direct client calls were made to inform them that support for claims and coverage concerns would be provided at their "farm gate."
  - Despite record claim levels, not one client service complaint has been received.
- Greater financial support continues to be a point of contention, however, determining the right way to approach mobilizing the AgriRecovery framework in the context of COVID-19 required extensive FPT consultation and we appreciate the opportunity to relay BC's specific needs.
- In future, Industry has called for quicker decision making on the part of all parties and increased clarity on the extent to which AgriStability can be used. An example would be the submission of expenses related to Temporary Foreign Workers.

## Labour

- Re-direction of funding
- Developed **health and safety protocols** for the safety of domestic seasonal farm workers in the Okanagan
- Staff support provided at airports and hotel to provide **translation support, cultural support** and coordination for incoming temporary foreign workers
- Re-direction of staff to manage recruitment and retention **labour challenges**

Industry outreach  
to gain feedback  
and provide support  
to **more than**  
**8,000 touchpoints**  
with producers and  
relevant  
associations



As labour emerged as our main priority,

we supported to the sector through new extension services by

- Developing **health and safety protocols** for the safety of domestic migrant workers in the Okanagan – working with the PHO to develop guidelines and protocols were established specifically for Ag operations
- Staff support provided at airports and hotel to provide **translation support, cultural support** and coordination for incoming temporary foreign workers
- Re-direction of staff to manage recruitment and retention **labour challenges**
- Re-direction of more than **17 staff** to manage and inspect housing for Provincial Health Order Industrial Camps compliance

## Sectors most impacted by Labour challenges



**Tree fruit**



**Field Fruit**



**Greenhouses and Nurseries**



**Field Vegetables and Mushrooms**

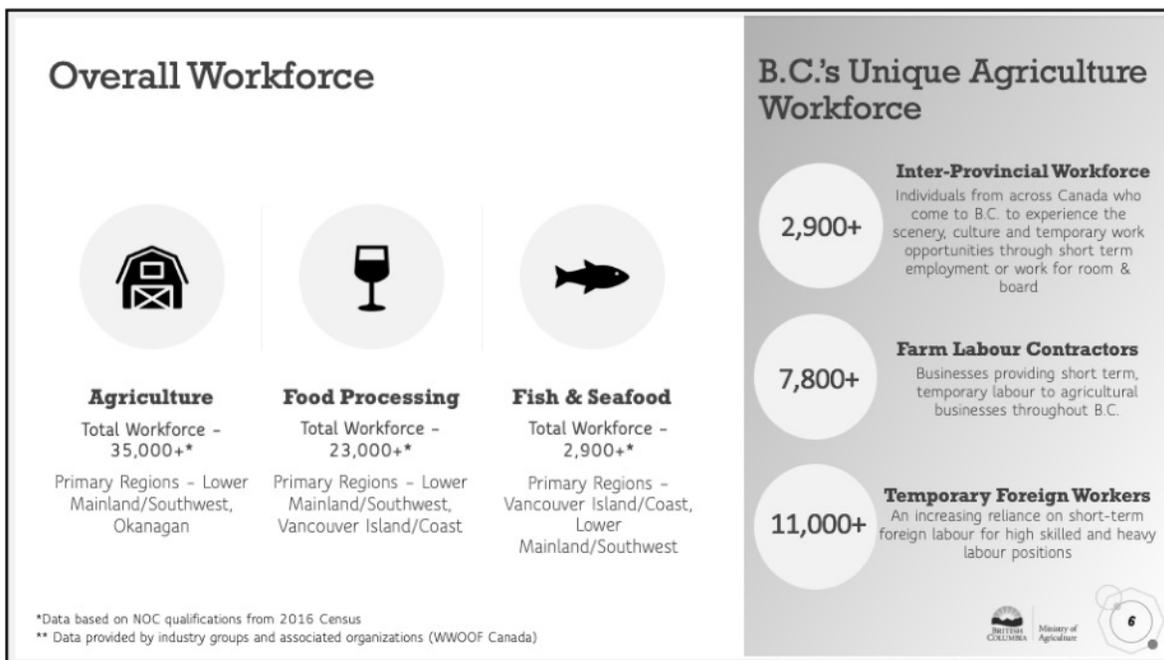


**Animal Agriculture**



### Farm Cash Receipts:

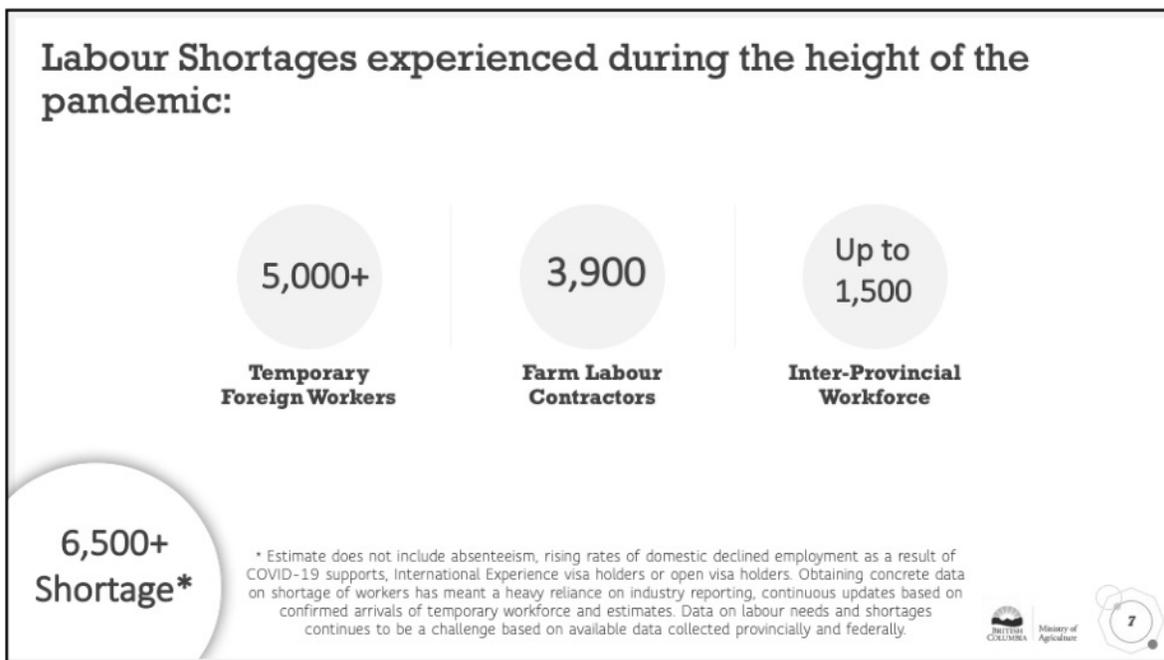
- Treefruit: \$389 million
- Total Fresh Fruit: over \$1 billion
- Grapes: \$63 million
- Field Vegetables: \$102 million
- Greenhouse: \$304 million
- Nursery: \$303 million
- Mushrooms: \$174 million
- Beef: \$236 million
- Dairy: \$671 million
- Poultry: \$568 million
- Food Processing overall: **\$9.8 billion**
- Treefruit, Field Fruit, Greenhouse and Nursery, Field Vegetables and Animal Agriculture are all dealing with compounding issues including climate related issues, pest control, disease management and unprecedented one-off natural events such as flooding and spring freezing.
- These sectors also suffered the most from loss of Temporary Foreign Workers, Inter-Provincial Migrant Workers and Domestic Workers.



- These numbers are from 2016 Census data, to give you an idea of what the commodity groupings look like in terms of labour – and how the labour challenge has compounded.
- Note that the regional distribution of our labour force is focused in a few population hubs – the lower mainland (Vancouver, Fraser Valley) – Vancouver Island and coastal communities – and Interior BC (the Okanagan)
- Also note how our workforce is supplemented and reliant on inter-provincial labour, farm labour contractors and temporary foreign workers – (TFW reliance is particularly notable in our treefruit industry) – with over 20,000+ workers contributing to our sector

**Pre-COVID**

- Agriculture **Total Workforce** – 35,000+\*
- Food processing **Total Workforce** – 23,000+\*
- Fish and Seafood **Total Workforce** – 2,900+\*



- 1,990 TFWs that arrived between Jan 1 and start of our TFW Program
- And
- 6712 TFWs Arrived to BC in total through 2020-2021
- And
- Industry is reporting shortages of inter-provincial workforce migrating to B.C.

**Cost**

- An estimated \$35M was be spent in 2021.

**Staffing**

- Staff were drawn from ServiceBC, GCPE, Health, EMBC, Labour, and AGRI, culminating in approx. 43 staff (not including Health) working on the program to some extent at its peak, with 13 staff (not including Health) working on the program to some extent now. A four person labour unit within the Ministry of Agriculture was created to manage this program full-time to relieve EMBC.

**Services**

- Service provided include accommodations, food, laundry, security, translated welcome and orientation materials, interpreters at arrival and departure, wellness walks, wellness checks (calls), and farm inspections.



**Focus on Relief, Recovery, Resilience**

Targeted funds will help sector relief, recovery & resilience planning/programs

**Economic stability, improved sector capacity & B.C. food system resilience**

**RELIEF** to stabilize sector businesses, markets and food supply

**RECOVERY** to regain lost ground/renew and improve sector capacity and strength

**RESILIENCE** to grow agriculture and food sector longevity and meet B.C.'s food system needs




- We continue our work operationally and we continue our implementation of programming and ministry supports around relief, recovery and resilience in our support of industry as they continue to face the uncertainty of the future due to COVID-19.
- As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, we are learning the variables as we go to inform our response.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### COLLABORATION

- Mobilizing quickly within the Provincial Government and determining roles and responsibilities is key.
- Externally, collaboration is essential and must be fostered with frequent communication.

### PREVENTION

- New and exacerbated existing issues related to health and safety of workers and the welfare of animals.
- Preventing compromises to human health and animal welfare requires proactive and timely action.

### LABOUR

- Provincial leadership and managing centralized processes for welcoming Temporary Foreign Workers.
- Developing tools to support, train, and encourage our domestic work force was key to maintaining the confidence of industry.

### ADAPTATION

- Long-term business model and behavioural changes are necessary in the industry workplace.
- Providing ongoing support for business changes to ensure businesses are able to transition and ultimately thrive.

### FUNDS

- Ensuring we can be nimble in reallocating program dollars as needed will be important in expediting our response.

### SUPPLY-CHAIN RESILIENCY

- Developing mitigation strategies for vulnerable industries to ensure supply chains continue moving and backlogs are prevented

COLUMBIA Agriculture



- While the public service within the Ministry of Agriculture struggled at first to construct an emergency response structure, it became obvious early on that our go-to emergency management operational structure would need to be expanded across the Ministry as opposed to our usual subset of key individuals – we ultimately opted for an approach tailored to the challenges we heard from our stakeholders from our extensive industry outreach and were agile in our approach.
- We are currently re-seated in our usual roles and responsibilities as we have operationalized our response effort into the course of our business lines.
- We determined early on that in order to allow and encourage businesses to continue operating, we would need to provide guidance and work closely with our Provincial Health Officer to adapt COVID-19 protocols to the Ag sector. This proved to be ultimately helpful in clarifying common questions such as “why am I not listed as an essential service” - “what does it mean to be an essential service?” and “how do I continue to operate within the guidelines set by the Provincial Health Officer?”
- We learned that our involvement as a facilitator of mitigation strategies related to TFW, as well as keeping our domestic labour force active was and continues to be key

- BC is one of two provinces in Canada that implemented a government managed, centralized approach to manage the 14-day self isolation period required of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs).
  - Since April 2020, the program has identified 62 cases of COVID; successfully managed the health and recovery of the affected workers; and prevented community transmission.
  - Over 750 sites have been inspected since March 2020 to ensure that accommodations for TFWs are compliant with the Provincial Health Officer's orders related to COVID-19.
  - Industry responded with a strong endorsement of BC's program which coordinated accommodation, food, wellness wrap-around services (translation services, walks), consular, industry and government communications, and an on-farm accommodation inspection regime.
  - Domestic Farm Workers (DFWs) predominantly from Quebec and Ontario also contributed to BC's agriculture workforce. The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen and local governments of Creston and Summerland were critical partners in quickly securing COVID-compliant campsite accommodations for hundreds of members in this workforce.
- Many producers struggled to adapt to the new way of business due to previous businesses models relying on in-person sales and events. We encouraged and facilitated adaptation to online presence for particularly vulnerable models such as Farmer's markets.
  - We instituted and reallocated existing programming to bridge the gaps and nuances not covered in broad Federal relief packages
  - Monitoring our supply-chain links at vulnerable points was constant and required quick action on the part of the Province when issues arose.
  - The Livestock supply-chain was particularly hard-hit, most notably the Poultry sector due to COVID-19 cases among the labour force at processing facilities.
  - Poultry abattoirs have common characteristics that make them more conducive to transmission of pathogens like COVID-19 that are spread through respiratory droplets.
    - high wstaff density;
    - staff working in close proximity to each other
    - high moisture orking environment
  - In April 2020, four abattoirs in B.C. experienced COVID-19 outbreaks at their facilities. These outbreaks all occurred in large poultry facilities that all have large numbers of staff working in close proximity and who often form communities based on common culture who live in shared accommodation and spend time together

socializing outside of work

- These closures forced the issue of looking closely at supply chain backlogs and prompted a cross-commodity discussion on humane euthanasia and the need for advance planning at every link in the supply-chain including on-farm.



## Looking Ahead

### Prioritizing Economic Recovery and Resilience



#### Economic Recovery Framework

- BC Beef Branded Meat Processing Plan
- Product Innovation and Adaptation for Food Processors
- LEAN for Food Processors
- Expansion of the B.C. Food Hub Network
- Small Farm Business Expansion Program
- Expansion of the Environmental Farm Plan and Beneficial Management Practices Programs
- Replant Program (raspberries and hazelnuts)
- Ongoing Grow, Feed and Buy BC programs and resources

#### Investments in People/Workforce (Labour)



- Recruitment Supports
- Management of TFW & DMW
- On-Farm Inspection
- TFW 14 day isolation Program: Hotel, Airport & Wrap Around Services
- Accessible PPE programming
- DMW Campground & Local Gov Coordination





Here are some examples of some of our priority areas as we move forward.

## COVID-19 Impacts on Agriculture

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) has developed an internal strategy to respond quickly to COVID-19 related issues across the agriculture and seafood sectors.
- We worked across the province (and continue to do so) in supporting our agriculture producers and processors through these difficult times.
- We have worked with the Ministry of Health and WorkSafe B.C. officials to ensure that safe operating guidelines have been made available to the agriculture, fisheries and food processing sectors.
- We continue to work with the federal government on ensuring COVID-19 response funding is both allocated appropriately and working to serve the needs of British Columbians in the agriculture industry.
- There continue to be market impacts to various seafood commodities that we are working with industry to help resolve and determine where the Province can assist.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Ministry conducted extensive and ongoing outreach across the agricultural sector to understand the issues the sector is facing and provide the support and assistance required to maintain operations and comply with Provincial Health Orders (PHO) orders to ensure a safe and secure food supply
- Between March and May 2020, approximately 50 Ministry Staff spoke with 5 stakeholders per day/3 days per week for 11 weeks = 8,250 points of outreach
- Staff reached out to 70 Industry Commodity Groups (Associations/Councils/Commissions) and 160 Individuals (Farmers, ranchers, farmer's institutes, farm markets, companies).

### CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:

#### Financial Supports

- British Columbia was the only province offering an initiative specifically targeting animal care facilities.

### PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:

#### Financial Supports

- Access to the 2020/21 Contingencies Vote was approved for the purpose of providing up to \$15M of emergency funding to support continued care of animals in major facilities,

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tourism attractions, and refuge and rehabilitation facilities for two months, ending June 30, 2020. \$4.2 million to 24 facilities was given out.

- AFF supported the delivery of programs to support Stronger BC and the impacts of COVID in FY20/21 by spending \$10M to support the following programs
  - Expanding BC's Food Hub \$5.600 M
  - Increasing BC Food Production and Processing \$1.950 M
  - Small Farm Business Acceleration Program and Provincial Replant Program \$0.890 M
  - On-Farm Innovation Top-Up Program \$1.600 M

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## 2021 ATMOSPHERIC RIVER EMERGENCY FLOOD RESPONSE

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Extreme precipitation events are projected to occur 25 to 50 percent more frequently across Canada when the global mean temperature increase reaches 2.0 deg C. Climate models project the frequency of atmospheric rivers on BC's coast will roughly double.
- The most significant impacts of the 2021 flooding occurred in the agriculturally intensive Sumas Prairie and eastern Fraser Valley, and parts of the southern interior (Merritt and Princeton). In the Fraser Valley, 1-in-20-year events are predicted to increase 22 percent by 2050.
- The agricultural sector (including food processing and aquaculture) has been heavily impacted by recent flooding and landslide events which caused livestock and poultry mortalities, crop damage and losses, supply chain interruptions, loss of forage and increased feed costs, impacts to agricultural soils due to deposition and contaminant releases, damage or loss of equipment, and mental health issues.
  - Flooding from the atmospheric river events resulted in significant livestock mortalities (approximately 431 cattle, 18,000 hogs, 709,000 poultry and duck, and 282,000 farmed fish).
- Under the *Emergency Programs Act*, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is committed to supporting producers by coordinating the emergency evacuation and care of poultry and livestock, providing advice on the protection of crops, livestock and provincially managed fish and marine plant stocks, and inspecting and regulating food quality.
- During the fall 2021 Atmospheric River event, the Ministry was called upon to simultaneously support the Provincial Emergency Coordination Center, 3 Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centers (EOC), the ministry's own EOC, and numerous local authority and First Nations government EOCs, including the Abbotsford EOC's Agriculture Branch, requiring the direct support of over 150 ministry staff.
- The ministry is providing recovery supports to flood impacted farms through the \$228 million 2021 Canada British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security, and its existing business risk management programs.

### ALC

- The ALC has worked with the City of Abbotsford to identify ALR properties impacted by floods.
- The ALC is prioritizing and expediting Applications and Notices of Intent (NOIs) for properties impacted by the floods.
- The ALC is waiving the Notice of Intent (NOI) fee (\$150) and its portion of the Application fee (\$750) for properties impacted by the floods.

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- The ALC has a flood response phone line on the ALC homepage for impacted ALR landowners to get assistance with Notice of Intent or Application questions and help expediate the processing of applications should they be necessary.
- If 75% or more of an existing structure has been substantially damaged or destroyed it is no longer grandfathered under the legislation and an application to the ALC to approve construction maybe required, i.e., if a principal residence greater than 500 m<sup>2</sup> is destroyed, the owner would need to apply to the ALC.
- The ALC has received and approved three (3) Notices of Intent (NOIs) as of February 14, 2022. Two (2) from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure related to Highway 8 between Merritt and Spences Bridge and one (1) in Abbotsford for a property owner to build hay storage above flood levels. As of February 14, 2022, there have been no applications submitted in the flood areas.

**BACKGROUND:**

These flooding and impacts from the Atmospheric River event were devastating and represent one of the biggest agricultural disasters in our province's history.

More than 1100 farms, 15,000 hectares and 2.5 million livestock from the Sumas Prairie in Abbotsford to Merritt and Princeton were impacted by the floods.

Severe losses were incurred by dairy, poultry, swine, beef, horticulture, fruit and vegetable growers, and land-based fish producers.

The damages to the agriculture sector are estimated to be over \$200 million

Reported poultry and livestock mortalities:

- Cattle (beef & dairy) = 431
- Swine = 18,000
- Poultry / Duck = 709,000
- Fish (Aquaculture) = 282,000

**Ministry Response**

The Ministry requested and received expense approval from Emergency management BC for just over \$30 million for response needs in support of impacted producers

As of March 9, 2022, approximately \$5 million worth of invoices have been submitted

Additional disaster response programming was activated to meet impacted producers' financial and safety needs during the immediate response period including:

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- **The Emergency Flood Forage Program (\$3 million)** - provided feed for commercial livestock businesses in situations where, due to a disaster and related emergency activities, a) they cannot access their normal forage/feed supply, and b) to keep their livestock safe, they are forced to use forage or feed resources that are normally required to feed livestock through the rest of their yearly production cycle.
  - **Feed Grain Cost Differential Program (\$2.5 million)** - ensures livestock producers do not bear the immediate and full financial burden of increased feed costs while the supply chain is re-establishing.
  - **Livestock Relocation Program (\$1.1 million)** - allows for local authorities and First Nations to relocate livestock from eligible farm businesses during the evacuation alert stage and receive reimbursement for incurred relocation costs.
- The ministry provided a variety of other support during the response including the processing of hundreds of vehicle fuel certifications and access permits.

ALC

- The ALC and the City of Abbotsford worked together to identify parcels where structures were impacted by flooding in Sumas Prairie both spatially (GIS Shapefile) and by individual property identification number (PIDs) in preparation for the possibility of applications to the ALC
- Much of Highway 8 and adjacent lands from Merritt to Spences Bridge impacted by flooding this winter are in the ALR.

The Ministry activated its emergency response plan on November 14<sup>th</sup> to provide support to lead agencies and the agriculture sector including:

- Activation of the Ministry Emergency Operations Center to coordinate ministry's response activities and support local authorities, First Nations and our response partners leading the response
- Dispatched ministry representatives to directly support response operations at the City of Abbotsford's Emergency Operations Center and Emergency Management BC's

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Central Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Center (PREOC), Southwest PREOC, Vancouver Island PREOC, and the Provincial Emergency Coordination Center in Victoria

- In total over 150 staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agriculture Land Commission were activated to support the ministry's response activities

Ministry support activities included:

- Establishment of a feed grain cost differential program to help offset the increased cost of animal feed due to supply chain impact and need to access grains destined for export at the Port of Vancouver
- Provision of emergency feed and water for livestock and poultry that included working with BC Wildfire Service and Emergency Management BC to provide helicopter delivery of these critical supplies for animal welfare and food security
- Assisting impacted producers with a variety of mental health resources and supports
- Development of an agriculture related essential services list to ensure agricultural vehicles access to restricted roadways and issuance of fuel certification letters to exempt agriculture related vehicles from emergency fuel purchasing limits
- The mass carcass disposal team coordinated over 14 haulers to assist with moving deadstock and identified 8+ disposal facilities to accept deadstock

Minister Site Visits

Minister Lana Popham provided ongoing leadership and support, provided important updates to British Columbians on the impacts to agriculture, and visited and met with impacted producers including:

- November 23<sup>rd</sup> - Air Tour of Fraser Valley and Merritt and Meeting with Mayor Braun (City of Abbotsford)
- November 30<sup>th</sup> - Meeting with BC Agriculture Council, Tour of Emergency Operations Centers in Abbotsford, Meetings with Industry Specialists in AFF
- December 10<sup>th</sup> Tour with Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau: Visited Ripples Estate Winery, Oranya Organic Chicken Farm, and Bosma Dairy Farm. Included lunch with MLA Pam Alexis, Mayor Braun, Chilliwack Councillor Kloot, Chief Dalton Silver (Sumas FN), Holger Schwichtenberg (Dairy), Jack DeWiit (Hog)
- December 17<sup>th</sup> - Visited Westberry Farms Ltd., Prokam Enterprises, Sumas Lake Aquafarm, Crossroads Dairy, Dave Martens – Poultry

**Industry's Response:**

A number of agricultural industry associations activated their emergency management frameworks to provide support and communications to their members throughout the event

Several associations, including poultry and dairy, provided representatives to assist with the response to the Abbotsford Emergency Operations Center's Agricultural Branch that was led by the MAFF

There were numerous examples of producers supporting one another to assist with response actions including sandbagging efforts, relocation of livestock, and other response actions

MAFF worked with AgSafe to provide mental health supports to impacted producers

Social media was used by producers to share offers of assistance and request support that mobilized rapid support from other producers and convergent volunteers

A Director from the BC Horse Council assisted with the organization of a helicopter rescue of a horse, goats, several mules, and a pregnant cow in the Spences Bridge areas that were trapped due to the flooding and impacts to the road network

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- The Province of BC and the Fraser Basin Council have taken important steps to assess and build flood management capacity across BC through the Investigations in Support of Flood Strategy Development in British Columbia initiative. Integrated Flood Management Plans are the current international best management practice approach for managing flood risk and there is great potential and interest among responsible authorities to build their capacity in this area.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The demands and expectations upon ministry resources have grown, and the ministry requires additional trained staff to support the anticipated volume of work in a sustainable manner. An independent Emergency Management unit was established in September 2021 – consisting of a Director and a STO21 position which was filled in late February.
- Historically, response to emergency events has been managed through the development a seasonal response roster of ministry volunteers (appx. 60+ members per season) and specialist staff (veterinary, livestock & poultry specialists, Premises ID/GIS, etc.) to support animal disease and other events. The seasonal roster provides assured support during peak response periods (i.e., wildfire season, freshet flooding).

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- During the fall 2021 Atmospheric River event, the ministry was called upon to simultaneously support the Provincial Emergency Coordination Center, 3 Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centers (EOC), the ministry's own EOC, and numerous local authority and First Nations government EOCs, including the Abbotsford EOC's Agriculture Branch, requiring the direct support of over 150 different ministry staff.

ALC

- ALC's is waiving its portion of the NOI (\$150) or Application fee (\$750) which goes into general revenue

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## **Emergency Response – Flood Recovery Financial Response (DFAA, AgriRecovery)**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- British Columbia (B.C.) farmers who suffered extraordinary damages during November 2021's devastating floods have access to up to \$228 million in federal-provincial government support to help their farms return to production and support British Columbia's food security and agricultural communities in the years ahead.
- The 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security will leverage the federal government's AgriRecovery Framework and Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).
  - The response maximizes the support we can provide to B.C. farmers and federal cost sharing under existing disaster recovery agreements with Canada and uses one application that will be processed under two rates and government agreements.
    - Farms with annual gross revenues up to \$2 million will receive up to 90 percent compensation for their expenses.
    - Larger, more resilient farms with annual sales of over \$2 million will receive 70 percent compensation.
- The November flooding was the most impactful agricultural disaster ever in our province, resulting in profound losses for many B.C. farmers, and we responded with a program that delivers the greatest amount of support of its kind in B.C.'s history.
- We have worked closely with farmers and farming organizations to make sure we have a comprehensive response that will support their recovery.
- The Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security will help farmers who have incurred extraordinary expenses from uninsurable damages, such as:
  - Cleanup, repair and restoration of land, barns and animal shelters, water, and waste systems; returning flood-impacted land and buildings to a safe environment for agricultural production.
  - Repair of uninsurable essential farm infrastructure, reasonable repair of on-farm structures such as livestock containment fences, and the rental of temporary production facilities drainage ditches and riprap.
  - Animal welfare; replacement feed as well as livestock transportation, veterinary care, and mortality disposal.
  - Loss of perennial plants not raised for resale.
- Build Back Better is important but given the importance of the affected region to the province's food security and economic stability, the priority for the program is to return farms to production.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) and its federal counterpart completed a financial impact assessment of the flooding impact to farms, it determined that the anticipated recovery costs for impacted farms will be \$285 million; this is net of existing agricultural risk management programs, disaster financial assistance and private insurance. The assessment, therefore, recommended that additional recovery assistance be required through DFAA and AgriRecovery cost share arrangements. As a result, the 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security was established on February 7, 2022.
- This is the first time the province has worked with Canada for farm disaster relief by utilizing both DFAA and AgriRecovery in tandem. By incorporating both mechanisms, B.C. can maximize its funding to support farm recovery, as DFAA includes a B.C.-Canada contribution of 10/90 (as opposed to AgriRecovery with a 40/60 contribution).
- The main criterion to determine farm eligibility under both DFAA and AgriRecovery is annual gross revenue. Farms with an annual gross revenue under \$2.000 million are eligible for DFAA with a compensation maximum of 90 percent of eligible costs. Farms with annual gross revenue above \$2.000M million are eligible for AgriRecovery with maximum compensation of 70 percent of eligible costs. See Table 1 for comparisons of the two cost share arrangements proposed.

|              | Federal Cost Share | Compensation Rate (coverage of eligible costs) | Farm Claim Maximum | Max. Eligible Annual Gross Revenue | Eligible if <50% Income is from Farming | Eligible if <50% ownership of farm |
|--------------|--------------------|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| DFAA         | 90%                | 90%  | NA                 | \$2.000M                           | Eligible                                | Not Eligible                       |
| AgriRecovery | 60%                | 70%  | NA                 | No Limit                           | Eligible                                | Eligible                           |

- The breakdown of farms that would qualify for DFAA versus AgriRecovery is unknown due to a lack of data on gross annual income of farms. The \$80.000 million maximum provincial contribution over the three fiscal years represents a worst-case scenario for B.C., what B.C. would pay if all payments were only eligible under AgriRecovery. Thus, there is high possibility of AFF not requiring the full \$80.000 million requested.
- The DFAA compensation rate is determined by the province, with a possible maximum of 100 percent. AFF recommends 90 percent compensation to minimize the difference from what higher grossing farms can receive under AgriRecovery (which has a maximum compensation of 70 percent).

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- AFF’s reason for not recommending a lower compensation rate was to ensure smaller farms receive sufficient funding, while maximizing the lower provincial contribution under DFAA.
- The AFF Business Risk Management Branch administers the Program, processing applications under the eligible mechanism, either DFAA or AgriRecovery.
  - Because Emergency Management B.C. (EMBC) is leading the DFAA shared cost arrangement with Canada on behalf of B.C., AFF would provide all eligible DFAA expenses to EMBC to submit on AFF’s behalf.
- There is a risk of providing financial support for farms to rebuild infrastructure to pre-flood conditions (as opposed to greater resiliency) in flood-risk regions where extreme weather impacts may occur more frequently. Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), along with other ministries, is developing a flood management framework that will consider approaches to address future severe flood risk, through building back for greater future infrastructure resilience in affected regions or considering managed retreat from highest risk areas.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- This event was unique to B.C.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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## **Q&As - Canada-BC Flood Recovery Program for Food Security**

### **1. When was the Canada-BC Flood Recovery Program for Food Security announced?**

- a. It was announced on February 7, 2021
- b. The application deadline is June 1, 2022.

### **2. What is it?**

- a. B.C. farmers who suffered extraordinary damages in this year's devastating floods have access to \$228 million in federal-provincial government support to help their farms return to production and support British Columbian food security and economies in the years ahead.
- b. The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to agricultural producers in the southwest, central, and southeast areas of British Columbia and Vancouver Island who were affected by flooding and landslides from November 14-16, 2021, which will help them deal with the associated Extraordinary Costs of returning to production.
- c. The funding will help farmers who have incurred extraordinary expenses from uninsurable damages such as:
  - i. The clean-up, repair and restoration of land, barns and animal shelter, water and waste systems.
  - ii. Returning flood-impacted land and buildings to a safe environment for agricultural production
  - iii. The repair of uninsurable essential farm infrastructure such as livestock containment fences, drainage ditches and riprap, as well as the rental of temporary production facilities
  - iv. Animal welfare expenses such as replacement feed as well as livestock transportation, veterinary care and mortality disposal
  - v. The loss of perennial plants not raised for resale.

### **3. What are the funding sources?**

- a. We are using two different Federal arrangements to make this work, the Federal Provincial Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement and the AgriRecovery policy framework.
- b. The response maximizes the support we can provide to BC farmers under existing disaster recovery agreements and practices, and to be clear, uses one application that will be processed under two rates and government agreements.
- c. Is this the new model for wildfires and other emergencies moving forward?

- i. It is the model for this specific flooding response.
- ii. Each emergency is different and responded to based on the needs of those impacted and the viability of the impacted sectors.

#### **4. How was the Program budget developed?**

- a. The severity of the event and need to quickly assist farmers required the establishment of a budget well before the extent of damage was known.
- b. Program scope was set.
  - i. Existing programs (AgriStability and AgriInsurance) cover income losses. Those losses are out of scope for the Recovery program.
  - ii. Information on the availability of commercial insurance was obtained. Insurable losses are out of scope
  - iii. The scope is defined as extraordinary costs required to return to production. This scope was made clear to industry through consultation.
- c. Immediate steps were taken to quantify potential damage.
  - i. Consultation with industry organizations
  - ii. Identified key individuals in each sector to consult on costs
  - iii. Reallocated ministry analytical resources to consult with industry representatives to identify types of damage and costs.
  - iv. Further industry consultation meetings held to quantify losses (number of farms, acres impacted, number of farm structures, amount of uninsurable equipment damaged).
  - v. Ten categories of losses were developed and based on extent of damage information from industry, value per unit and compensation rates a total value was established.
  - vi. A final consultation with industry was held to review program applications and terms and conditions.
- d. The \$285 budget includes a 25% contingency to account for any underestimation of extent of damage and to cover potential costs of rectifying on farm environmental contamination. To date no contamination issues have been identified.

#### **5. What are the criteria/mechanics?**

- a. The program is open to agricultural producers who were impacted by 2021 flooding and have their main farmstead in British Columbia and
  - i. files farm income tax under the Income Tax Act in B.C.; or can provide acceptable documentation that demonstrates the production and sale of agricultural commodities; and

- ii. owned or leased crop production land or Eligible Livestock within the Designated Area as of November 14, 2021
- b. To apply a farm owner will complete one general application and a loss schedule for the types of losses they are claiming.
  - i. The forms collect the information we need to complete the process with diligence and accuracy.
  - ii. Once a farmer begins an application, an adjustor will be available to walk the farmer through the application and help assess damages (in some cases this could result in a non-farm visit).
  - iii. Then, once the adjustor has completed their assessment, and as the supporting receipts and documentation are provided, those claims will be processed in a timely manner to ensure the farmer receives financial support as quickly as possible.
  - iv. Application packages are available at [www.gov.bc.ca/agrifloodrecovery](http://www.gov.bc.ca/agrifloodrecovery) and farmers who need assistance with their applications can also contact Ministry of Agriculture staff for one-on-one support at [agrirecovery@gov.bc.ca](mailto:agrirecovery@gov.bc.ca) or 1 888 332 3352.
- c. How long will it take to process each application?
  - i. Each claim will be processed as quickly as possible. Staff are working urgently to review each unique application, and processing time will be based on the submission of records of expenses. There will be some variation, depending on each farmer, the types of damages and their record keeping, but staff are hard at work to process claims expediently to ensure farmers receive financial support as quickly as possible.

## **6. How will the advance payments work?**

- a. Advance payments are going to be very helpful for farms who have had their cash-flow disrupted or need it to prepare for production in 2022.
  - i. If an adjustor receives the required information and documentation, an advance payment based on those specific expenses the farmer incurred will be issued.
  - ii. One example of an expense that may be eligible for an advance payment is an uninsurable barn that has been repaired and is now back in production and the farmer has documented the expenses. In this case, an assessor could approve an advance payment, which could be paid to the farmer within a few days.
  - iii. Every situation is different, and will be based on the damage, and the documentation of the expenses to repair it. Under our existing

- AgriStability framework, advance payments of up to 75% can be made for example.
- iv. The repair work must be completed, or the advance will be required to be paid back.

## **7. One window, why two rates?**

**K.M.-** B.C. seized an opportunity to increase compensation to many farms to 90% for several types of loss. This had never been done in B.C. before and this provision only exists for agriculture due to the work of my Ministry. The \$2 million revenue limit for the 90% compensation is a federal rule we are unable to address. Under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement farms with revenues over \$2 million are to receive no compensation. We were able to also negotiate an AgriRecovery initiative ensuring large farms could receive 70% compensation. I realize the disparity in compensation raises questions from large farmers. The only alternative for avoiding the compensation disparity between large and smaller farms was to pay smaller farms less. I trust you agree accessing 90% compensation for smaller farms is the preferred alternative.

- a. Some losses under the Flood Recovery program are being compensated at 90% while others are being compensated at 70%.
  - i. This is because of combining AgriRecovery and a Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement (DFAA) with Canada into a single program accessed from one application. DFAA provides compensation at 90%. AgriRecovery compensates at 70%
- b. The coverage per category was developed based on existing agreements and protocols with the federal government.
  - i. Farms with annual gross revenues up to \$2 million will receive up to 90% compensation for their expenses.
  - ii. Larger, more resilient farms with annual sales of over \$2 million will receive up to 70% compensation.
- c. This is the first time we have had the opportunity to pay a higher compensation rate to help farmers recover and it is part of the federal and provincial government's response specific to this flooding disaster.
- d. DFAA compensation at 90% is not available on any type of plant loss. It is available for clean-up and repair costs.
  - i. AgriRecovery is available to all size farms and for plant losses.
  - ii. All extraordinary costs ineligible for DFAA are eligible under AgriRecovery.

- e. The decision was made to access 90% compensation, where possible, and apply the 70% compensation from AgriStability where 90% was not possible.
  - f. Wildfire losses this summer will not get topped up to 90%?
- 8. Is it fair that a farmer with revenue of \$2 million receives up to 90% coverage while one with \$2.01 million gets 70%?**
- a. We have worked hard to provide the greatest amount of support possible to B.C.'s farmers under existing federal provincial policies.
    - i. The two compensation rates does raise questions however avoiding it would have required not providing 90% compensation where possible.
  - b. We worked extensively with the many different farming groups who experienced the hardship and heartbreak the flooding caused and have overwhelming support for the response plan we developed.
  - c. Of the farms that we've heard have experienced flood damage, the majority have revenues under \$2 million.
  - d. We firmly believe that offering smaller farms with up to \$2M revenue up to 90% support is better than the alternative of offering everyone 70%.
  - e. Larger, more resilient farms are eligible for substantial compensation to cover up to 70% of eligible expenses – the usual amount covered by agricultural recovery packages.
- 9. Why was the \$2 million in annual revenue cut off chosen?**
- a. That number is part of existing parameters used in the Disaster Financial Assistance Agreements between the federal and provincial governments.
- 10. What had to happen to bring it to fruition and what was tweaked/improved to suit BC's needs (negotiations with Canada), etc.**
- a. We are using two different Federal arrangements to make this work, the Federal Provincial Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement and the AgriRecovery policy framework.
  - b. The response maximizes the support we can provide to BC farmers under existing disaster recovery agreements and practices, and to be clear, uses one application that will be processed under two rates and government agreements.
  - c. We have worked with farmers and farming organizations at each step of the development of this response to make sure it works for them, and they have assured us this will provide the financial support they need to help them get back to production.

**11. Translation services and We are meeting directly, at kitchen tables, if necessary to support farmers.**

- a. We have an established team of Ministry staff and contractors with experience and expertise in farm insurance and risk management programming who will be available to offer one-on-one assistance to applicants in both English and Punjabi.
  - i. Program information is available on the website in French, Punjabi, and English.
- b. The support will also be based on the commodity, so for example blueberry growers will be working with staff who are familiar with that crop, and the same for poultry producers and so on.

**12. Why did it taken so long for farmers to get this financial assistance program?**

- a. We worked to get money to people as quickly as possible.
- b. When the floods happened, we immediately deployed staff to local emergency operation centres to ensure agricultural support was available.
- c. We worked overtime with the federal government to develop the largest agricultural recovery package of its kind in B.C. history - \$228 million in recovery support to help them return to operation and strengthen our food security and food economy.
- d. We have worked with farmers and farming organizations at each step of the development of this response to make sure it works for them, and they have assured us this will provide the financial support they need to help them get back to production.

**13. Why doesn't this program cover lost income?**

**K.M.-** I understand the re-establishment of lost perennial crops may mean several years before income levels return to normal. Income losses are specifically excluded from both Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements and AgriRecovery. The AgriStability program, along with AgriInsurance are in place to deal with income losses. AgriStability provides compensation at a whole farm level meaning farmers with diverse lands and enterprises, whose overall farm revenue is not seriously reduced by flood losses, may not be directly compensated for flood losses. The existing programs will provide a meaningful response in most instances for at least two years of income loss. If both AgriInsurance and AgriStability were utilized by a farmer, the response improves. Once the extent and duration of income losses can be more accurately estimated we will re-evaluate the program response.

- a. There are other programs that offer crop insurance and protection for lost income.
  - i. AgriStability is a continuous program that provides assistance against severe drops in income, based on individual farm's income and expenses in previous years for both livestock and crop producers.
  - ii. Applications for the 2021 year are still open, with interim payments often possible within a few weeks of application.
  - iii. Agri-Insurance provides coverage for many fruit, vegetable and forage harvests, often with a low premium of a few hundred dollars a year.
    - 1. For example, a 60-acre blueberry farm can obtain insurance coverage for a harvest worth about \$325,000 for about \$300 in premiums a year.
  - iv. Both programs are affordable and flexible in the type of coverage they provide.

**14. What about the blueberry farmers who won't have income for 3 years?**

- a. Supports are available for that situation through AgriStability.
- b. AgriStability is a continuous program that provides assistance against severe drops in income and increases in expenses, based on individual farm's income and expenses in previous years for both livestock and crop producers.
- c. The B.C. government is also allowing late participation in the AgriStability program for 2021, which provides support to farmers who have experienced income declines due to crop or livestock losses.
- d. This means B.C. farmers that are not currently enrolled for the 2021 program year can now apply to enroll up until Dec 31, 2022.
- e. Interim payments are often possible within a few weeks of application.
- f. We're going to be working together to recover from this disaster for some time. We're going to keep monitoring needs as we get through this together.

**15. How will this help blueberry growers or other farmers replace damaged or dead plants?**

- a. The ministry has other programs in place for blue berry crop losses including Agri-Insurance which provides coverage for many fruit, vegetable and forage crop harvests, often with a minimum coverage premium of a few hundred dollars a year.
  - i. For example, a 60-acre blueberry farm can obtain plant loss insurance coverage worth about \$325,000 for about \$300 in premiums a year.

- b. The funding will only cover expenses related to re-establishment of tame forage and perennial plants, not grown for resale, damaged by flooding, as well as costs required to return to normal crop production such as soil evaluation and remediation.

**16. Why are there different compensation rates for different crops (i.e., flowers vs blueberries)?**

- a. The scope of the Recovery program is limited to the extraordinary costs required to return to production, it is not intended to cover income losses or annual costs.
  - i. In the case of an annual seeded crop that was lost, there is only assistance for some extra soil preparation, all other costs of replanting an annual are normal expenses.
  - ii. In the case of a loss of a perennial where the whole plant is sold (e.g. nursery trees) this a loss of income and covered under AgriStability.
- b. The compensation and coverage for different crops, as outlined on the application portal, were, in part, determined with each individual sector.
- c. The replant costs outlined for crops like blueberries are based on industry advice and ministry analysis and have also been verified by an independent agrologist.
  - i. The recovery program will provide blueberry farmers with 70% compensation based on the estimated figure for replant costs and three years of growing costs, after taking into account what the ministry's production insurance would provide. (Some perennials take less than 3 years, and some take 5 years so the three is an average).
  - ii. Together, the recovery program's blueberry replant value and plant loss insurance (if enrolled) would provide 81% of the expected cost per acre.

**17. Numerous producers of annual crops, in particular annual vegetable crops, winter annual forages, and leeks, have complained they are receiving minimal per acre payments to return to production compared to perennial crops. Why do they get less?**

- a. While the disparity between compensation on annual and perennial crops is stark it is entirely based on necessary extraordinary costs; not costs that incurred annually.
- b. Returning annual crop to production, once clean-up and repairs are completed, does not cause extraordinary costs. An annual crop can be replanted as normal and with regular input costs.

- i. Annual crop producers are all being paid a small amount for the extraordinary cost of an additional tillage operation.
- c. In contrast perennials are not replanted each year, and the replant costs for perennials which are not sold as whole plants, are covered under the program.
  - i. The compensation paid for replanting perennial crops does not include a replacement of lost income.

**18. What about damages to farmers houses, will that be covered too?**

- a. This package is solely for farming expenses that are not covered through other programs or private insurance.
- b. Farmer's residences are covered by private insurance and/or disaster residential funding through EMBC – and I know EMBC is working to process those applications and get money out to people as soon as possible.
- c. The Ministry will not be assessing damages to homes, and other components beyond the agricultural scope of this program but will work with provincial DFA colleagues to make sure applicants are aware and up to date on the status of their claims.

**19. How about housing for farm workers?**

- a. Housing used exclusively for farm workers, both domestic and seasonal for out of province and country workers is covered, providing the buildings were not eligible for private insurance.

**20. What about tractors and farm machinery?**

- a. This package is solely for extraordinary farming expenses that are not covered through other programs or private insurance
- b. Farmer's machinery and equipment can be and usually are covered by private insurance.

**21. Will the response cover costs to replace dead livestock?**

- a. The fund will provide market value for breeding animals who died in the flooding, but not animals which can be insured privately or market animals.

**22. Does this funding cover farming infrastructure?**

- a. It will cover critical infrastructure not covered by insurance. For example, labour costs to repair private fences damaged by flooding.

### **23. What has response to the Flood Recovery Program been?**

- a. 8<sup>th</sup> March update for the 2021 Canada BC Flood Recovery Program for Food Security
  - i. 310 Applications Received
    - 1. all clients have been called to discuss and arrange farm assessment visits
    - 2. clients are gathering insurance, tax and loss information supported by Agri staff and contractors.
    - 3. BRM team has called all prospective clients who had enquired (previously) but not yet sent an application.
  - ii. 150 Field assessments - on going. Many clients will need 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> visits over the coming months as decisions on planting and repairs are made.
  - iii. 55 payments approved by program operations, total value of \$8 M
  - iv. 9192 website visits since Feb 7; English, 7,944; French 19; Punjabi 1,229
- b. First Nations update
  - Nooaitch Indian Band meeting Feb 24; members meeting contractor 7th March
  - Shakan Indian Band Feb 22 call with Chief Arnold Lampreut – Sent program details and to arrange further meeting. March 7 Follow up email sent to Band
  - Emailed Sumas First Nation (no response as yet)
  - Emailed Leqamel First Nation (no response as yet)

## WILDFIRE- AND DROUGHT- EMERGENCY RESPONSE

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Over the span of three months, the seasonal wildfire response covered four regions and nine wildfire events. The cattle industry suffered 282 mortalities due to the fires. In August 2021, wildfires placed over 280 premises under evacuation order or alert. The most significant impacts occurred in the Central and Southeast.
- Wildfire impacted a significant number of livestock operations, pushing operators reliant on crown range to feed their livestock off their range leaving no summer forage for livestock.
  - Crown range supplies approximately 30% of the annual forage needs of the tenured herd.
  - Approximately 12,000 beef cattle were affected by Order and 23,000 by Alert.
- Additional disaster assistance programming was activated and funded through Emergency Management BC to meet impacted producers' financial and safety needs during the immediate response period including:
  - **The Emergency Feed Program (\$1.32 million)** - provided feed for commercial livestock businesses in situations where, due to a disaster and related emergency activities, a) they cannot access their normal forage/feed supply, and b) to keep their livestock safe, they are forced to use forage or feed resources that are normally required to feed livestock through the rest of their yearly production cycle.
  - **Livestock Relocation Program (≈ \$1 million est.)** – allows for local authorities and First Nations to relocate livestock from eligible farm businesses during the evacuation alert stage and receive reimbursement for incurred relocation costs.
  - **AgriRecovery (\$20 million)** – supports producers during the post-event recovery process by offsetting the extraordinary costs required to return to production which are not otherwise covered by programming or insurance. It is developed in conjunction with the Federal government and industry.
  - BC Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) administered a **Range Rider Program** to assist ranchers in rounding up and gathering animals on crown rangeland affected by wildfire and either returned cattle to their home ranch sites or to alternative private/crown sheltering locations. BCCA disbursed a total of \$155,575 on riders.
    - Its peak, the program deployed 27 riders to one incident. Riders were deployed a total of 437 days with 104 days being the maximum number taken responding to an event.
- Under the *Emergency Programs Act*, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is committed to supporting producers by coordinating the emergency evacuation and care of poultry and livestock, providing advice on the protection of crops, livestock and

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provincially managed fish and marine plant stocks, and inspecting and regulating food quality.

- The ministry is completing after-action reporting from the wildfires and is actively addressing numerous action items in preparation for the 2022 season.
- The ministry is working to support the agriculture sector's resiliency to wildfire through climate change related initiatives and encouraging producers to undertake FireSmart activities to help safeguard their operations.
- In October 2021 the Ministry announced funding (\$67,661.00) for two emergency livestock trailers to be deployed in the event of floods, wildfires, or transportation accidents to assist with handling and moving animals. These trailers are anticipated to be in place March 2022.
- The ministry's Business Risk Management Branch (BRMB) manages five permanent insurance and income assistance programs which support producers by buffering them from the impacts of disasters and emergency events.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The summer heat dome saw temperatures far outside historical norms. As the global climate creeps towards 2 deg C above preindustrial levels, such an event shifts from a once in a thousand-year event to a once every 5-to-10-year event.
- From April 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2021, 1,610 wildfires burned 868,203 hectares in B.C. Approximately 60 per cent of wildfires in 2021 were natural-caused, 35 per cent were human-caused and the remaining 5 per cent is undetermined.
- A provincial state of emergency was declared on July 21, 2021 and stayed in effect for 56 days until Sept. 14, 2021.
- The wildfires triggered the implementation of 181 evacuation orders and 304 evacuation alerts, many of which impacted agricultural producers, particularly beef cattle and some dairy and poultry operations.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The demands and expectations upon ministry resources have grown, and the ministry requires additional trained staff to support the anticipated volume of work in a sustainable manner. An independent Emergency Management unit was established in September 2021 – consisting of a Director and a STO21 position which is in the process of being filled.
- Historically, response to emergency events has been managed through the development a seasonal response roster of ministry volunteers (appx. 60+ members per season) and specialist staff (veterinary, livestock & poultry specialists, Premises ID/GIS, etc.) to support animal disease and other events. The seasonal roster provides assured support during peak response periods (i.e., wildfire season, freshet flooding).
- The Ministry budgets \$50k annually to support the development of knowledge transfer and decision aid support tools to increase industry's capacity to response to

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emergencies.

- In 21/22 the Ministry provided \$65K to support the purchase of two emergency livestock trailers to be deployed in the event of floods, wildfires, or transportation accidents to assist with handling and moving animals

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## Farmers Information Service

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Farmer Advocate Office (FAO) expired in 2018 after serving the Peace region since 2010. The FAO officially closed July 1, 2019.
- A new contract, with a new service provider was in place December 1, 2020, to launch the Farmer Information Service (FIS). The contract has been extended to March 31, 2022.
- 2021 saw limited use of the Farmer Information Service because of the downturn in the oil and gas sector, Covid-19, and the Blueberry River First Nations (Yahey) ruling.
- Although there has been limited use of the service over the past year, the longer-term value of Farmers Information Service is recognized.
- AFF and EMLI are exploring continuing the service but will downsize the service to match the current demand. However, staff will be actively monitoring the demand and will increase FIS capacity if required.

### BACKGROUND:

- In 2009, EMLI, AFF and the PRRD started a project to provide landowners with information to help them understand surface leases and right of way access with the oil and gas industry with the intention of improving the relationship between rural residents and the oil and gas sector. The resulting FAO was opened in Dawson Creek in 2010 under a pilot project and was reviewed in 2012. The review resulted in a decision to continue with the FAO through a MOU with the PRRD for another five years.
- Funding for the management and implementation of the FAO was cost shared by EMLI and PRRD between 2010 and 2018, where each party provided 50 percent of the funding to the maximum program cost of \$270,000 per year.
- The cost sharing arrangement between EMLI and PRRD expired in June 2018. At that time, the PRRD Board asked that EMLI and AFF take on the full responsibility of funding FAO.
- EMLI, AFF and the PRRD recognized the value that the FAO provided to landowners and have been working on updating the functions of the office to reflect evolving operational needs.
- On February 4, 2020, AFF, EMLI and the PRRD signed a MOU to revitalize this important service.
- Highlights of the changes include:
  - Changing the name of the office from the Farmers Advocacy Office to the Farmers Information Service to reflect the overall mandate to be a source of information for rural landowners.
  - FIS management continued through a management committee.

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- AFF took on the administrative functions of the FIS, this included drafting of the MOU, overseeing the procurement process, and holding the contract with the successful proponent.
- The FIS will be cost shared between EMLI, AFF, the PRRD and the OGC for a period of up to two years to a maximum program cost of \$180,000 per year. Cost sharing will be broken down as follows:

| <b>Organization</b>                                    | <b>Annual Contribution</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries         | \$60,000                   |
| BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation | \$60,000                   |
| Peace River Regional District                          | \$30,000                   |
| BC Oil and Gas Commission                              | \$30,000                   |

- AFF engaged in a competitive process through BC Bid to secure a contractor for the FIS. All proposals were thoroughly reviewed by the FIS management committee.
- The FIS Contractor (Maria Reschke) has been contracted from December 1, 2020 to March 31, 2022.
- The contract has the option to be extended for up to one additional, one-year term at the discretion of the Province. A contract extension for FY22/23 is currently being explored.
- FIS workplan for 2020/2021 included:
  - Supporting clients in the PRRD in navigating interactions with the oil and gas industry.
  - Creating a website with links to resources and information regarding oil and gas activity.
  - Creating a current resource library for clients.
  - Establishing a collaborative working relationship with provincial government and local government agencies.
  - Reporting to the management committee on a quarterly and annual basis regarding the activities and outcomes of the FIS.
  - Hosting an annual joint information session with provincial government, local agency, and industry representatives to provide updates on client needs and to clarify the work of the FIS.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- This is a collaborative contract between AFF, EMLI, and the PRRD. Within B.C. many entities have connection to oil and gas activities on agricultural lands including:

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- Within B.C., EMLI tenures subsurface rights to Petroleum and Natural Gas (PNG) resources.
- AFF is responsible for supporting the production, marketing, processing, and merchandising of agriculture products and food; research, advisory, promotional, or educational extension programs; and projects relating to agriculture and food.
- The OGC is the regulatory agency responsible for oil and gas activities within B.C.
- The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is mandated to preserve agricultural lands and encourage and enable farm business throughout B.C.
- The Surface Rights Board (SRB) assists in resolving disputes when landowners and resource developers cannot agree on compensation or other terms of entry to land.
- The Peace River Regional District (PRRD) works to support rural, community and regional interests on behalf of its constituents.
- In Alberta, a public agency known as the Farmers’ Advocate Office supports farmers and ranchers in several topic areas including utilities and surface rights as well as rural disputes.
- In addition, the Alberta Energy Regulator is tasked by the provincial government to regulate development of energy sources.
- The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) regulates federal energy infrastructure. The CER’s roles include Indigenous and stakeholder engagement, providing information regarding land matters involved in an energy project and provision of alternative dispute resolution in resolving issues with a company about a project of facility under CER regulation.
- In Saskatchewan, the Surface Rights Board is an arbitration board which serves as last resort when agreements for surface access to private land cannot be reached between landowner/occupant and oil, gas, or potash operators. It is unknown if additional entities have associated roles in Saskatchewan.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information
- The Regional Agrologist in the Peace is the ministry staff lead on this project with approximately 0.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) allocated to management and oversight of the FIS.

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## Farmers Institutes

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (the Ministry) has invested in supporting a network of Farmers Institutes across B.C.
- The Ministry continues to support Farmers Institutes with funding to maintain and update the BC Farmers Institutes website.
- The Ministry operates and funds many programs that offer support to both individual Farmers Institutes and their members in relevant topic areas such as knowledge transfer, new entrants, business planning, environmental sustainability, risk management and traceability.
- Ministry staff across the province regularly connect with Farmers Institute members about programs and opportunities of interest.

### BACKGROUND:

- Farmers Institutes (Institutes) are rural organizations that may be incorporated or continued under the *Farmers and Womens Institutes Act* (the *Act*). They are similar to, but distinct from, Societies incorporated under the *Societies Act*.
- Farmers Institutes have existed since the late 1800s under a variety of legislation. Institute and member numbers have declined overall in past decades as other forms of farm organizations have arisen and as the farm population has declined. However, some regions have recently seen increased interest in Farmers Institutes.
- Approximately 42 Institutes with an estimated total of 1,600 members are or were recently in good standing under the *Act* across British Columbia. Membership is diverse but may include a mix of farmers and non-farmers within an Institute's area.
- Institutes vary widely in size, composition, interests, and level of activity.
- Minister Popham convened BC Farmers Institutes events in 2018 and 2019 to provide opportunities for Institute representatives to interact and share information directly with each other. Ministry staff coordinated and facilitated these events.
- The Ministry funded development of a standalone non-government web platform in 2019 to allow Institutes to connect to and share information more easily with each other and the general public.
- The Ministry funds ongoing maintenance of the website.

### CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:

- N/A

### PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:

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- The Ministry provided approximately \$22,000 in 2018 and \$20,000 in 2019 to support BC Farmers Institutes events convened by the Minister.
- The Ministry provided approximately \$41,000 for the design and development of the BC Farmers Institutes website in fiscal year 19/20 and an additional \$5,000 for website maintenance and updates in each of fiscal years 20/21 and 21/22.
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information
- Multiple ministry staff liaise with and support Institutes regularly via an appointed Superintendent to administer the legislation; annual reports receipt and filing; knowledge transfer events; information gathering and dissemination.

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## Feed BC

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Feed BC helps grow food system resilience and local jobs and businesses across the province. Through Feed BC, we're working to connect and build opportunities between B.C.'s many public institutions and B.C. producers and processors.
- Feed BC partnerships with public institutions help agriculture and food businesses participate in B.C.'s \$415 million per year non-commercial food service market.
- Our government and public sector partners are a key part of our success.
- With the Ministry of Health (HLTH), Feed BC supported all health authorities to increase their proportion of B.C. food expenditures from 27.3% (2018/19) to 30.8% (2019/20), an increase of \$3.5M spent on B.C. grown and processed foods.
- In 2021, Feed BC expanded its formal health authority partnerships to Vancouver Coastal Health, Island Health and Provincial Health Services Authority facilities, and is now a feature of all regional health authorities.
- With the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST), Feed BC is also helping public post-secondary institutions increase B.C. foods on campuses across the province. In 2021, Feed BC had formed partnerships with 20 institutions who are all committed to growing their B.C. food purchases toward a minimum of 30% and increasing local food awareness and opportunities in the local communities they serve.
- Feed BC is working closely with the Ministry of Education (EDUC) to help bring more local foods to K-12 schools across the province, in support of EDUC's mandate commitment for school food programs.
- Our Feed BC supply chain partners are also critical to our success, including foodservice companies, purchasers and food distributors working with public institutions. With recent pressures from the pandemic, wildfires, floods, and supply chain challenges, they brought renewed energy and commitment to B.C.'s food system and the social and economic benefits of supporting our local producers and processors.

### BACKGROUND:

- Feed BC was a 2017 Minister mandate letter commitment to increase the use of B.C. grown and processed foods in hospitals, schools, and other government facilities.
- Expanding Feed BC is part of new 2020 mandates to help encourage greater food security and local business growth, and to support the work of EDUC by integrating Feed BC so school districts can include more locally grown food in school meal programs.
- Feed BC's strategies build public and private sector collaboration, awareness and demand for B.C. foods, and the capacity of B.C. food producers and processors to meet

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those demands.

- Feed BC's programs, tools and resources ensure ongoing support for current and new partners to help them achieve their local food goals within a structure of minimum standards, targets and methods for tracking progress in procuring more B.C. food.
- Feed BC aligns with other government priorities including the strategic interests of government partners and takes a comprehensive 'whole supply chain' approach to increase demand, supply, and innovation that brings B.C. food benefits to communities (new jobs, and economic development and diversification).
- Feed BC works within existing trade agreements and provincial policy to help public institutions advance local food work that reflects their unique interests, communities and regions.
- Feed BC was first implemented in healthcare through a HLTH partnership directing all health authorities to annually track B.C. food expenditures and, without violating trade agreement obligations, seek opportunities to purchase more B.C. foods (early aspirational target of 30%). Year 1 (2018-2019) tracking saw a 27.3% average across health authorities, while Year 2 (2019-20) tracking saw a 30.8% average. Year 3 (2020-21) tracking results are expected by end of March 2022.
- Feed BC is being implemented in public post-secondary institutions (PSIs) through partnership with AEST and the Ministry's Administrative Services Collaborative (ASC) representing all public Post-Secondary Institutions (PSIs). For 2019-2022, Feed BC is one of the ASC's six strategic priorities. Feed BC projects with PSIs to date include assessment of practices, barriers and opportunities for increasing B.C. foods, procurement guidance including better tracking and sourcing of B.C. foods, market intelligence on 'in-demand foods' in PSIs that could be sourced in B.C., and new B.C. food product innovation to meet PSIs' needs.
- Feed BC is supported by a Feed BC in PSIs Advisory Committee that reports to the ASC and AEST. As of January 2022, 20 public post-secondary institutions are partnered with Feed BC:
  - British Columbia Institute of Technology
  - Camosun College
  - Capilano University
  - Coast Mountain College
  - College of New Caledonia
  - Douglas College
  - Langara College
  - Kwantlen Polytechnic University
  - Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
  - Okanagan College
  - Royal Roads University
  - Selkirk College

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- Simon Fraser University
  - Thompson Rivers University
  - University of British Columbia
  - University of Fraser Valley
  - University of Northern British Columbia
  - University of Victoria
  - Vancouver Community College
  - Vancouver Island University
- 
- Post-secondary partners are committed to working across departments to track and source more B.C. food, build innovative local food initiatives and promote local food education and awareness on campus and beyond.
  - All regional health authorities are active Feed BC partners: Interior Health (2019), Fraser Health (2020), Northern Health (2020), Vancouver Coastal Health (2021), Island Health (2021) and Provincial Health Services Authority (2021).
  - Feed BC is exploring opportunities with the K-12 sector with EDUC. In early 2020, Feed BC co-sponsored a school food environment survey of all K-12 public schools in partnership with the ministries of Education and Health. Results will help confirm B.C. food opportunities within the K-12 system to support EDUC mandate letter commitment to expand school meals.
  - Feed BC is a priority initiative for government procurement under the B.C. Procurement Strategy and is working with the Ministry of Citizen Services and procurement working groups, experts, and leaders to understand food service provision/ B.C. food opportunities across public sector institutions and facilities.
  - Feed BC provides a range of program supports to increase capacity and help prepare B.C. food producers and processors to meet the stringent requirements for selling food products to government-supported facilities. These include:
    - Guidance, education, and training to help B.C. food producers and processors become more 'government facilities-ready'
    - Ministry specialists, expanded technology, and program development to better connect and innovate between facilities and B.C. food products
  - A Feed BC Value Chain Advisory Committee representing the full food service supply chain advises on and tests gaps and opportunities, including value chain coordination to pull B.C. food products through the supply chain that meet government facilities' needs.
  - Feed BC is also engaged with senior executive leaders across food service management and broadline distribution companies on how their corporate policies and practices align with and could better support Feed BC's objectives.
  - Given different 'local/B.C. food' definitions across public institutions, baseline information is challenging for more independent government-supported facilities such as colleges and universities. Feed BC has worked across stakeholders and partners to develop Feed BC program standards for sourcing and tracking B.C. foods including

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definitions, targets, and methodology.

- Feed BC is building a comprehensive reporting framework with metrics and indicators to quantify Feed BC progress across different sectors, institution types, and partners. This includes an economic impact analysis measuring the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of increases in B.C. food expenditures by public institutions including GDP, employment, labour income and tax impacts.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Many jurisdictions have initiatives which promote the use of regionally grown and processed foods. These range from legislated approaches to local food strategies, funding programs, and procurement policies and practices. Ontario and New Brunswick are currently involved in initiatives in-line with Feed BC's objectives, and in 2020 Quebec launched a provincial strategy for local foods in public institutions.
- B.C. is becoming increasingly known within the public and private sectors as a lead 'local food' jurisdiction in Canada. Feed BC's 'whole supply chain' approach to building demand, supply and innovation is being recognized as comprehensive and robust.
- Ontario:
  - Ontario's initiatives begun several years ago are still in place under its Local Food Strategy, which includes a *Local Food Act* and funding for various grants and programs.
- New Brunswick:
  - New Brunswick's key initiative around local foods in public institutions is a comprehensive approach to bringing more local foods to school cafeterias in all corners of the province.
- Quebec:
  - Quebec's approach includes a registry of Quebec products, institution market product development program, local food promotions, and a cross-Ministry committee to ensure engagement and a coordinated approach for public institutions to purchase of Que foods.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

Budget 2021

- B.C. provided \$1,289,000 for Feed BC Year 3 projects and initiatives in 2020/2021
- Focus: expanding scope, scale and reach of Feed BC through new: government partnerships, Feed BC program standards, B.C. product sourcing for partners, targeted public sector-supply chain projects, value chain innovation service and technology, to bring long-term shifts and business opportunities to the sector. Due to extenuating circumstances of COVID-19, some projects were delayed, modified, or redirected to business recovery.

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- Feed BC expenditures aligned with core program strategies:
  - Government Facilities Strategy: Implementation in healthcare facilities, post-secondary institutions and supporting projects equals \$175,300
  - Producers and Processors Strategy: Business development supports equals \$128,400
  - Value Chain Innovation Strategy: Technology and partnerships equals \$236,000
  - Feed BC staff resources were \$596,000

**BUDGET 2022**

- As of January 2022, B.C. had provided \$1,012,000 for Feed BC Year 4 projects and initiatives in 2021/2022, of which \$605,000 was salaries.
- Feed BC Year 4 focused on growing institutional and supply chain partnerships and business activation opportunities for B.C. food and beverages: building a post-secondary institution network of partners and supports, launching the Ministry’s Value Chain Innovation Service and technology, business coaching support and B2B events, institutional market readiness projects, new approaches to building more opportunities for traditional foods and Indigenous recipes in public institutions, an economic impact analysis of increasing B.C. food purchases by public institutions and working to include a strong B.C. food component to the Ministry of Education’s K-12 school food programs mandate commitment. Due to extenuating circumstances of COVID-19, as well as wildfires, floods and supply chain disruptions that had a dramatic impact on the agriculture and food sector, some projects were delayed, modified, or redirected to support business recovery.

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## BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program (BCSFVNP) is funded by the Ministry of Health through end of year funding.
  - It is intended to improve the nutritional health of BC children by delivering fruit and vegetable snacks directly to all BC schools throughout the school year.
  - The program, delivered by BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation (BCAIFC), has funding to operate until the end of the 2021/22 school year.
  - A funding request has been submitted to the Ministry of Health to support delivery of the program for the 2022/23 school year.
  - The Ministry of Health will consider their proposal against government priorities and fiscal implications.
- The Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture, Food & Fisheries are working together on the 2021 mandate to ensure students are properly fed for learning while including local foods.
  - The Ministries are exploring opportunities to build off and adapt existing programs, such as the BCSFVNP, to help meet this mandate.

### Background:

- The BCSFVNP was initiated in 2004 to provide BC students with fresh, local fruit and vegetables in their schools. The program is delivered by the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.
- The overarching goal of the BCSFVNP is to improve the nutritional health of BC children by working collaboratively with partners to deliver fruits and vegetables directly to all BC schools. Additional objectives of the BCSFVNP include:
  - Increase students' acceptance of, exposure to, and willingness to try, BC-grown fruits and vegetables and BC-produced milk.
  - Increase students' knowledge and awareness of fruits and vegetables as nutritious foods to eat plenty of (fresh, frozen, canned or dried) and knowledge and awareness of milk as a nutritious protein food and healthy beverage option.
  - Increase students' knowledge about how fruits and vegetables, delivered as part of the program, can be prepared.
  - Increase awareness of foods grown and milk produced in BC by students, educators and parents.
  - Increase student access to BC-grown fruits and vegetables and BC- produced milk in schools.
  - Support the BC economy and build relationships between industry partners by working with local growers, producers and distributors to bring fresh BC products to schools across the province.
  - Contribute to increasing the number of students who report that, at school, they are

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- learning how to care for their physical health.
- Support the delivery of BC's new curriculum through providing high quality, evidence based, easily accessible, user-vetted resources for educators, with a specific focus on the Physical and Health Education subject and the Personal Awareness and Responsibility competency.
- The BCSFVNP has grown from an initial launch of 10 schools in 2006 to 1,451 (K-12) public and First Nations schools in the 2020 school year. With the help of almost 4000 volunteers and partners, BCAITC provides fresh fruit and vegetable snacks 12 times in the school year to more than 500,000 students.
- Program enhancements include BC milk for children in K-5 ("+Milk") in partnership with the BC Dairy Association and the "Fresh to You" fundraiser where students sell seasonal BC produce bundles to raise funds for their school.
- The 2013 BCSFVNP program evaluation found that overall, students and schools participating in the program benefited, as did produce partners. Some specific findings were:
  - There were demonstrated changes in the willingness of students to try fruits and vegetables though results were more pronounced in elementary as compared to secondary students.
  - 99 per cent of program coordinators and teachers indicated that the increase in produce availability at their school was notable.
  - 13 grower/processors reported the program was profitable, allowed them to reach new markets and that their involvement drove new business or helped them reach new markets.

### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

Provincial Agriculture in the Classroom organizations receive support from the Provincial Government in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. AITC Canada receives support from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada.

### **PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION (IF APPLICABLE):**

- The BCSFVNP is typically funded by the Ministry of Health though end of year funding. The total annual cost to run the program is normally approximately \$4.5M. The following historical program values are from BCAITC Annual Reports:
  - 2014 total BCSFVNP revenue \$3.7M, \$2.2M spent on agriculture products.
  - 2015 total BCSFVNP revenue \$4.6M, \$3.0M spent on agriculture products.
  - 2016 total BCSFVNP revenue \$5.4M, \$3.7M spent on agriculture products.
  - 2017 total BCSFVNP revenue \$4.5M, \$3.2M spent on agriculture products.
  - 2018 total BCSFVNP revenue \$4.5M, \$3.2M spent on agriculture products.
  - 2019 total BCSFVNP revenue \$4.4M, \$3.1M spent on agriculture products.
  - 2020 total BCSFVNP revenue \$3.4M, \$2.3M spent on agriculture products.
    - The reduction in the 2020 program value reflects student lower student numbers due to COVID-19.

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- 95% of the agriculture products purchased for the BCSFVNP are produced in BC (see Table 1). The exception is mandarin oranges purchased in December.
- The BC Dairy Association contributes 50 per cent of the cost of the “+Milk” program enhancement, at cost of approximately \$350,000 annually.
- The First Nations Health Authority has provided approximately \$74,000 annually for expanded delivery of the program to First Nations youth.
- BCAITC has identified the following impacts if the program is discontinued:
  - Over 1,000 B.C. farmers would lose sales from growing and providing product to the BCSFVNP (see Table 1).
  - Loss of a complex delivery system that transports B.C. produced foods to schools across the whole province.
  - Loss of capacity to deliver agriculture, food, and health education programs in B.C. schools.
- BCAITC has submitted an end of year funding request to the Ministry of Health for the 2022/23 school year.

**Table 1 - Value of Products to the BCSFVNP 2020/2021**

| <b>Product</b> | <b>Value</b>       | <b>Product</b>   | <b>Value</b> |
|----------------|--------------------|--|--------------|
| Carrots        | \$67,700           | Snap Peas  | \$70,000     |
| Tomatoes       | \$298,000          | Cucumbers  | \$217,700    |
| Apples         | \$493,000          | Blueberries  | \$47,000     |
| Grapes         | \$26,000           | Strawberries   | \$15,000     |
| Pears          | \$325,900          | Peppers  | \$226,000    |
| Plums          | \$77,600           | Mandarins  | \$172,000    |
| Peaches        | \$22,000           | Soy  | \$40,000     |
| Kiwifruit      | \$173,000          | Milk   | \$800,000    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$3,070,900</b> | (lower than previous years because of COVID-19 and less students in schools) |              |

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## ESTIMATE NOTE - SUPPLEMENTAL

### Feed BC support for B.C. businesses and products in 2021-2022

- In 2021-22, 102 food businesses from more than 20 communities across BC benefited directly from Feed BC through new business opportunities and Feed BC business/market readiness training
- Despite significant supply chain disruptions and facility closures or reductions throughout the 2021-22 fiscal year, health authorities and post-secondary institutions (PSIs) remain committed to increasing the amount of BC food and beverages that they source and serve

### HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW B.C. PRODUCTS IN B.C. INSTITUTIONS 2021-2022

- **Daybreak Eggs** from Terrace is now supplying Northern Health with fresh whole eggs. Daybreak Eggs is Northern Health's first supplier from northern B.C.
- **Goodly Foods**, a Vancouver social enterprise based in Commissary Connect Food Hub, is now supplying 4 varieties of soup to Fraser Health through Gordon Food Service. Goodly Foods soups are also being served by Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia.
- **Farming Karma Fruit Company**, a family run apple orchard and fruit processing business in Kelowna, is now selling fruit sodas to University of British Columbia cafeterias.
- **BC Frozen Foods'** frozen carrots and peas are being served in Northern Health (beginning 2020).
- **Okanagan Select**, an Indigenous-owned fishery, is providing salmon to Provincial Health Services Authority (beginning 2020).
- **Alkeme Gluten Free Bakery** sourdough from Rossland is now being purchased and served by BC Forensics Psychiatric Hospital in Coquitlam.
- **Pequish Food Company** ready-to-eat sandwiches, salads, and breakfast wraps are now being served at Simon Fraser University cafeterias.
- **Barakah Eats** ready-made South Asian meals are now being served in Vancouver Island University's cafeteria.

Feed BC continues to work closely with institutional partners to encourage sharing information as available about B.C. products they are purchasing, whenever possible

### NEW B.C. PRODUCTS CARRIED BY DISTRIBUTORS SERVING B.C. INSTITUTIONS 2021-2022

- Through work with Feed BC, new products now available to B.C. institutions through large-scale distributors include: **Portofino Bakery** products; **Phillips** sodas; **Tomorrow Foods**, **Top-Valu Foods**, and **Yuma Soy** plant-based products; **Island Chef Pepper** hot sauces and **Kindred Culture** kefir drink.

### FEED BC BUSINESS AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT 2021-2022

- 23 B.C. processing businesses presented their products and businesses to institutional foodservice buyers at two Feed BC Pitch and Plate events (resulting in 4 business deals with more in progress)
- 35 B.C. food businesses received institutional market readiness training and access through a Feed BC funded training program and tradeshow.

## ESTIMATE NOTE - SUPPLEMENTAL

- 14 B.C. processing businesses received in-depth consulting support to improve their operational efficiency and increase competitiveness through the Feed BC-funded B.C. Lean for Food Processors program.
- 11 B.C. producer businesses received CanadaGAP training (produce food safety certification required to access the institutional market and other domestic and export markets).
- Currently, 50 B.C. food businesses and 220 products are listed on the new Feed BC Directory to directly connect with institutional buyers and other large markets (target: 1000+ products).

## BC Food Hub Network

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Through the BC Food Hub Network program (Network), the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) fosters growth and innovation in B.C.'s food and beverage processing sector with improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, technical services and business supports.
- The Network is developed in collaboration with industry, communities, and post-secondary institutions while also serving the regional and sector diversity of the province.
- Food hubs are shared-use food and beverage processing facilities that offer food, agriculture, and seafood businesses access to commercial processing space, specialized equipment, expertise, and resources.
- The approach of integrating the BC Food Hub Network into the broader regional and business ecosystem supports rural economic development, regional partnerships, and increased connectivity across regions. Food hubs help stimulate local economies through job creation, attraction and retention, and the provision of infrastructure and services to improve food processors' business readiness and capacity to grow. The BC Food Hub Network supports a diverse group of entrepreneurs to be ready to access markets.
- In the 2021/22 fiscal year, the Ministry continued to support the development and next-stage growth of the twelve Ministry-funded food hubs and worked to strengthen the BC Food Hub Network through the following initiatives:
  - The UBC Endowed Food and Beverage Innovation Research Professorship, which will provide leadership for the Food and Beverage Innovation Centre, currently in development.
  - Funding for the Kootenay Farms Food Hub in Creston (through the StrongerBC Economic Recovery Plan) and the Comox Valley Food Hub Business Plan, which was a continuation of commitments made in the previous fiscal year.
  - Support for the Sprout Kitchen Food Hub's growth to a full-scale food hub. The hub, located in Quesnel, was previously funded as a small-scale hub.
  - Print material and videos were created to educate producers and the public about the BC Food Hub Network, the food hubs, and their clients.
  - The development of a governance model framework and stakeholder engagement strategy designed to establish a shared vision and direction for the BC Food Hub network.
  - The Ministry also funds additional activities to support the expansion of the Network, including but not limited to a BC Seed Hub Feasibility Study and the development of Network-wide support tools, including customizable standard operating materials and training.

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- The BC Food Hub Network provides important support for rural economic development and food security by creating new opportunities for producers and food processors while connecting more British Columbians to local food.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Network supports the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' Mandate Letter Commitment to "expand the Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programs to encourage greater food security and local business growth."
- The Network is comprised of twelve regional food hubs and an Endowed Food and Beverage Innovation Professorship, currently held by Dr. Anubhav Pratap Singh, at the University of British Columbia Vancouver campus.
- The Endowed Food and Beverage Innovation Professor leads academic and applied industry research in food and beverage processing and develops partnerships with other post-secondary institutions.
- The Network program will bring together services and technology that improve support to the agriculture, seafood, and food processing industry and advance innovation in the province's processing sector.
- Through the BC Food Hub Network, five hubs have been awarded funding through the Ministry's base budget in the following communities.
  - One Pilot and Demonstration food hub in Vancouver (\$750k) that launched in early 2019.
  - Two food hubs in Surrey (\$750k) and Port Alberni (\$750k) that launched in summer 2020.
  - One food hub in Salmon Arm (\$565k) that launched in late fall 2021.
  - One food hub in Quesnel (\$500k) that is operational and has plans to expand to a full-scale food and processing and innovation hub in 2022.
- Seven hubs received funding through the StrongerBC Economic Recovery Plan in the following communities. This includes \$50k each to implement technology platforms.
  - Cowichan Valley (\$800k) is under development and is anticipated to open in late 2022.
  - Kamloops (\$800k) has two operational facilities, including the Gardengate Training Centre and the Kweseltken Mobile Food Processing Unit. Their 3RD HACCP facility is under development and anticipated to open in Summer 2022.
  - Victoria (\$800k), which is under development and is anticipated to open in Spring 2022.
  - Abbotsford (\$800k) which is anticipated to open in Spring 2022.
  - Rock Creek (\$800k) is under development and is anticipated to open before Spring 2023 (location change from Rock Creek and Greenwood not publicly announced).
  - Bowser (\$550k), which officially opened in Fall 2021.
  - Creston (\$550k), which officially opened in Fall 2021.

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- Additionally, \$715k was awarded to fund further activities for expanding the Network, as follows:
  - Funding technology service and/or platform supports for regional food hubs (\$400k) to pilot and demonstrate Commissary Connect’s proprietary integrated technology platform at three regional Food Hubs (The Dock+ in Port Alberni, Sprout Kitchen in Quesnel, and Plenty & Grace in Surrey).
  - Initial planning and implementation activities for an Upper Skeena regional food hub (\$165k contract executed, no public announcement to date).
  - Feasibility study assessing how regional food hubs can support seed processing and storage activities, and the acquisition of seed processing equipment for regional food hubs (\$46k contract executed in 2021/22).
  - A Network needs assessment (\$100k contract executed in Summer 2021).
  - A Comox Valley food hub business plan (\$50k contract executed, not publicly announced).

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. is a leader in food and beverage processing innovation, and the Network is an innovative model that is new to Canada, encompassing an Endowed Professorship leading academic and applied industry research in food and beverage innovation and food processing and innovation hubs (‘food hubs’) across the province that are tailored to the regions in which they are developed.
- Currently, B.C. is the only province in Canada that funded the expansion of a Food Hub Network as part of its COVID-related economic recovery initiatives.
- The governance model framework includes a jurisdictional scan of existing food hub network models in North America and/or other regions to identify best practices.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Through the BC Food Hub Network Budget, the Ministry allocated \$1.03M during 2021/22.

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Endowed Food and Beverage Innovation Research Professorship | \$490,000          |
| Kootenay Farms Food Hub Development                         | \$250,000          |
| Comox Valley Feasibility Study                              | \$20,000           |
| Sprout Kitchen Food Hub Development                         | \$92,000           |
| Food Hub Partner Materials                                  | \$70,000           |
| B.C Seed Hub Feasibility Study                              | \$46,000           |
| Network-Wide Support Tools and Training                     | \$50,000           |
| Governance Model Framework                                  | \$15,000           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$1,033,000</b> |

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## Greenhouse Carbon Rebate Tax Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Greenhouse Carbon Tax Relief Grant (GCTRGP) is a program that rebates 80 percent of carbon tax on eligible fuel purchases and focuses on commercial vegetable, floriculture, wholesale, and forest seedling nursery greenhouse operations.
- This program provides relief to our greenhouse and floriculture growers and helps them to remain competitive with other Canadian and international jurisdictions, who have either similar rebate programs or lower carbon taxes. The British Columbia (B.C.) greenhouse and floriculture industry employs about 5,000 British Columbians.
- The program is fully expended annually, with demand from commercial vegetable and horticulture growers using all the available budget.
- Cannabis production has not been covered by the program because they have not faced the same ongoing competitive disadvantages that B.C.'s greenhouse vegetable and horticulture producers have experienced with growers in other jurisdictions.

### BACKGROUND:

- The GCTRGP began as a pilot in 2012, and was made permanent in 2013, to help offset carbon tax costs.
- As part of the initial supports in response to the COVID-19 pandemic the planned carbon tax rate increase for April 1, 2020, to \$45 per tonne was delayed until April 1, 2021. Annual \$5 per tonne increases have resumed since.

| Year                   | Carbon tax rate |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 2017                   | \$30/ tonne     |
| April 1, 2018          | \$35/ tonne     |
| April 1, 2019          | \$40/ tonne     |
| April 1, 2021          | \$45/ tonne     |
| April 1, 2022, onwards | \$50/ tonne     |

- The Program supports the Province's commercial greenhouse industry, which requires carbon dioxide and purposefully produces it for plant growth. The program enables B.C. producers to remain competitive with producers in other jurisdictions, who are not subject to a carbon tax, and encourages the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- The GCTRGP provides eligible B.C. commercial greenhouse operators with a grant of 80 per cent of the carbon tax paid (in the previous calendar year) on natural gas and propane used for heating and carbon dioxide production.

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- The GCTRGP benefits over 190 B.C. commercial greenhouse vegetable, floriculture, wholesale landscape nurseries, and forest seedling operations. Cannabis is not an eligible crop at any phase of production, including propagation.
- To qualify for a grant, an applicant must be an eligible British Columbia commercial greenhouse operator during the current production year, submit a completed application form and submit required documentation to the AFF. Applicants must also have had sales exceeding \$20,000 in the previous calendar year; used natural gas or propane to heat their greenhouses or produce carbon dioxide; and had a production area greater than 455 square metres.
- The 2022 program intake is anticipated to be open for applications by May 2022.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- The federal government implemented a carbon tax and rebate program for provinces and territories that did not previously have carbon pricing schemes that met federal requirements (i.e., Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Yukon, Nunavut).
- Greenhouse operators in these specific provinces can apply to Canada Revenue Agency for a Fuel Charge Exemption Certificate, under Section 36 of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, to receive an 80 per cent relief from the fuel charge on natural gas and propane for growing plants.
- This is aligned with, but does not duplicate, B.C.'s program. As such, the Program ensures B.C. greenhouse growers equally benefit from grant reliefs that are applicable across Canada.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The Program is fully expended each year. In 2021, the budget was \$7.55 million. The GCTRGP returned approximately \$11 million to commercial greenhouse operators in 2021/22.
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

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## Grow BC

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Grow BC supports sustainable production by helping B.C. producers expand local food production and business growth.
- The Agriculture Land Reserve and support to local governments through the Strengthening Farming Program help ensure land is available for farming.
- The current regional services provide extension services that support on farm profitability, grow the sector, promote environmental sustainability, and enhanced public trust and agriculture awareness.
- Grow BC includes programs to enhance sustainable production through the adoption of new and existing technology and regenerative practices to ensure food security within B.C.
- A suite of business development resources and services are provided to support sustainable management practices, business growth, succession planning, risk mitigation, and Indigenous agriculture development.
- Through Industry Competitiveness, the Ministry prioritizes strategic investments into key B.C. commodities that will accelerate the research, development and adoption of new varieties and cultivars to improve yields, harvest quality, and disease/pest resistance.
- Grow BC Seed, Plant Breeding and Variety Trials Initiative engages farmers, industry associations, and academia in producing and commercializing locally relevant seed and crop varieties that will allow B.C. producers to adapt and succeed in meeting changing consumer demands, labor challenges, and changing climate conditions.
- As a key strategy under Grow BC, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) delivers the BC Land Matching Program and delivered the pilot year of the Small Farm Business Acceleration Pilot Program to support the implementation of the New Entrant Strategy, a framework for increasing the number of new and young farmers working in B.C.'s agriculture sector.
- Sustainability also depends on farmers' access to clean water, clean air, and healthy soils, as well as farmers' actions related to environmental stewardship.
- The Environmental Farm Plan program supports farmers to complete on-farm risk assessments and access cost-share funding to mitigate environmental risks.
- The Ministry also supports climate adaptation and mitigation through the creation of Regional Adaptation Strategies and implementation of regional adaptation projects as well as supporting on farm research and extension to focusing on resilience to climate-related risks.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Grow B.C. is a pillar of the Grow, Feed, Buy BC mandate focused on supporting sustainable, profitable, and expanded primary production in B.C.
- See Estimates notes for further detail on specific Grow BC components:
  - New Entrants – Support For New Beginning Farmers
  - New Entrants – BC Land Matching Program
  - Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUIs)
  - Nutrient Management
  - Tree-Fruit and Nut- Hazelnut & Raspberry Revitalization and Replant
  - Bees-Bee BC Program & Bee Technology & Transfer Program

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Not Applicable

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The ministry invested \$390,000 to land access for new and young farmers through the BC Land Matching Program.
- The ministry invested \$295,000 in 2021/22 to increase coverage of Agriculture Land Use Inventories (ALUIs) across the province and improve usability and accessibility of ALUI data. This included completing update surveys of Abbotsford and Chilliwack and completing baseline inventories for the Cariboo and Kitimat Stikine.
- The ministry invested \$400,000 to support its Nutrient Management Program. This included funding 8 nutrient management projects that included decision support tools, producer cost-share funding to support the adoption of practices, knowledge transfer events and a nutrient management training program.
- The Ministry supported the planting of 55,000 new hazelnut trees through investment of \$400K into the Hazelnut Renewal Program (HRP) from 2018-2021 and has budgeted 100k for 2022-2023.
- The Ministry funded the Raspberry Revitalization Program (RRP) with \$104K in funding to producers for 46 acres of new raspberry plantings and has committed to fund 76 acres of new raspberry plants in 2022.
- The Ministry invested in the Bee BC Program between 2018-2022 up to \$450K and the budget for the Bee Tech Transfer Program is 525K (2021-24, \$175K each year)
- Grow BC requests through the 2021 Treasury Board Submission for incremental increases were: FY 21/22: \$13.399M, FY 22/23: \$16.599M, FY 23/24: \$18.149M, FY 24/25: \$18.149M

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## Groundwater Licensing

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Many farmers depend on groundwater to run their operations, and under the *Water Sustainability Act (WSA)*, are required to attain a groundwater licence.
- B.C.'s water licensing system is a fair and transparent process that helps reduce conflicts between water users, particularly in times of drought and water scarcity.
- With a licence in place, a farmer secures the right to use groundwater and protects their water supply for agricultural purposes.
- All farmers who use groundwater for non-domestic purposes whose use began on or before February 29, 2016, were required to submit an application for their existing use before the March 1, 2022, deadline.
- Non-domestic use includes purposes such as irrigation, livestock watering, commercial, waterworks or industrial use.
- Farmers who applied before the deadline can continue using water while they await a decision on their application, or in accordance with the decision they received.
- Farmers who did not apply before the deadline must cease diverting groundwater for non-domestic purposes. If they wish to resume using water for a non-domestic purpose they must apply as a "New User" and acquire a new water licence before they recommence.
- Farmers who missed the deadline are encouraged to contact FrontCounter BC for support with their new use application.
- During the transition period, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) participated in over 100 groundwater licensing outreach activities to farming communities across the Province including workshops, conferences, publications, field tours, and webinars.
- As part of the application process, farmers and Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) staff use AFF's BC Agriculture Water Calculator (online tool) to successfully calculate annual water use requirements.

### BACKGROUND:

- On February 29, 2016, the *Water Sustainability Act (WSA)* was enacted, requiring licensing for both surface water and non-domestic groundwater use. Under the previous *Water Act*, only surface water use was required to be licensed.
- A water licence provides the user a right to divert and use water for the volume and purpose specified, and it provides a priority date associated with that use.
- Priority dates establish the order by seniority of water rights on the same stream or groundwater source, and they inform the order in which users will have access to water in times of water scarcity.

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- The WSA provided a six-year transition period for existing groundwater users to apply for a groundwater licence through a process designed to recognize their date of first use. That transition period expired on March 1, 2022.
- Water licence application fees (typically \$250 or more) were waived for existing users during the transition window. Applicants were liable for annual rentals for the water use (at least \$50 per year), which began accruing on February 29, 2016, when the WSA came into effect.
- Now that the March 1, 2022, licensing deadline has passed, all new applicants are considered to be "new" users, irrespective of when they first started using groundwater. Priority dates for new users are typically the date the application is made. Application fees are not waived for new applicants.
- ENV introduced the WSA and are responsible for development of regulations and policy under the WSA.
- FLNRORD is responsible for adjudicating water licence applications and implementing the WSA.
- AFF is a strong supporter of groundwater licensing to minimize the impact on farmers and help farmers secure rights to use water.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In Alberta, farmers need to obtain a licence under the Water Act to divert groundwater or surface water.
- In Saskatchewan, every person desiring approval to commence the construction, alteration, extension, or operation of works and/or right to use water shall file with the Water Security Agency.
- In Manitoba, licences are issued for municipal, agricultural, industrial, irrigation and "other" purposes.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- To date, AFF contributed \$178,000 to the development and enhancement of the BC Agriculture Water Calculator, out of the total of \$262,000 from AFF, ENV and FLNRORD.
- AFF contributed an additional \$100,000 in-kind and cash to deliver over 100 groundwater licensing outreach activities to farming communities across the Province including workshops, conferences, publications, field tours, and webinars.
- AFF plans to continue to work with ENV and FLNRORD on potential new features and improvement to the calculator and outreach activities to support groundwater licensing for agriculture.

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## Indigenous Agriculture – Indigenous Agriculture Development Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Through our programs, services and strong relationships built on trust, understanding and respect, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) strives to support Indigenous governments, organizations, and entrepreneurs to meet their economic self-determination goals and build capacity in the agriculture and food sector.
- We are committed to continuing to move forward with lasting and meaningful reconciliation through the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)*
- One of the ways we are strengthening this relationship is by working together to support Indigenous peoples' success in the food and agriculture sector.
- AFF has a dedicated Indigenous Agriculture Team supporting tailored programs and outreach, supporting access to technical expertise, pathfinding and making connections to additional programs and services, and coordinating across the Ministry to support the implementation of DRIPA.
- The B.C. Indigenous Agricultural Development Program, funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), provides funding to complete Agriculture Opportunity Assessments, financial and business plans, coaching, and other training to assist Indigenous governments, organizations, and entrepreneurs to succeed in their business endeavors, build their knowledge and make informed decisions.
  - Over 70 First Nations, one Métis Society and nineteen entrepreneurs have completed IADP projects since 2011.
  - Twenty-two applications were approved and funded for 2021/22 (14 Governments, Communities and Organizations and 8 entrepreneur stream projects).
- In addition to economic health, we also support community health by promoting local agriculture and food security. We have heard from our Indigenous partners that local food security and food sovereignty are high priorities especially related to the COVID-19 and emergency climate event related impacts experienced over the past two years.
- AFF is uniquely positioned to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities both on and off reserve, endeavoring to narrow the socio-economic gap that separates Indigenous peoples from the rest of British Columbians and support Indigenous peoples' self-determination objectives.

### BACKGROUND:

- AFF is committed to the full implementation of *DRIPA* through the alignment of laws, policies, and programs with the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. AFF has developed a plan to implement the *Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*, which includes three focus areas: Self Determination, Building Capacity, and Program and Economic Development.
- The Ministry's Indigenous Agriculture Team is comprised of 3 staff who support First Nations and Métis communities and entrepreneurs in the development and growth of their agriculture and food businesses and initiatives. Other team roles include:

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- Providing secretarial support to the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF – see IACAF estimate note) which was initiated in 2019 and formalized in 2021.
- Working with the Regional Agrologist Network to facilitate referrals and access to local knowledge, resources, programs, and advisory services.
- Working with Feed BC staff to support two initiatives with Indigenous foods components:
  - Increasing access to traditional foods in publicly funded institutions, and good collection practices for wild harvesting. Supporting projects to advance food and agriculture priorities brought forward by First Nations or Indigenous organizations.
  - Chairing AFF's DRIPA Internal Working Group to support the Champions Reconciliation Committee and development and implementation of the DRIPA Action Plan.
- B.C. Indigenous Agriculture Development Program (IADP), funded through CAP, supports Indigenous peoples' success in the food and agriculture sector. The program includes two streams of tailored services for (1) Governments, Communities and Organizations and (2) Entrepreneurs and provides a two-step process for:
  - Agriculture Opportunity Assessments (up to \$5,000 for Stream 1 and \$3000 Stream 2), including feasibility studies and business and food security planning with a Qualified Business Advisor; and,
  - Business Planning (\$10,000 for Stream 1, \$5,000 for Stream 2), including business and financial planning services, technical training, and capacity building.
- Over 70 First Nations, one Métis Society and 19 entrepreneurs have completed IADP projects since 2011.
- Twenty-two applications were approved and funded for 2021/22 (14 Governments, Communities and Organizations and 8 entrepreneur stream projects).
- The *Indigenous Agriculture Inventory* project launched in 2019, in partnership with Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC increased the understanding and information available on the involvement, opportunities, and challenges of Indigenous peoples in the food and land-based agriculture sector. Deliverables included:
  - A database of publicly available Indigenous food and agriculture enterprise information and a review of existing reports and studies have been completed as part of Phase 1.
  - A report summarizing of findings of a literature review and engagement with First Nations and Métis farm operators, governments and supporting organizations to identify opportunities to improve access to agriculture and food security funding and support going forward.
- Staff developed a *Greenhouse Checklist* tool in response to the high level of interest and investment in small scale greenhouses by First Nations communities and Indigenous producers. The checklist supports critical planning and decision-making processes for community greenhouse projects.
- Staff also work closely with organizations such as the First Nations Health Authority, the Ministry of Health and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. and the Yukon on local food systems and community food initiatives.
- AFF Youth Development Program staff have worked to increase engagement of Indigenous youth in agriculture through delivery of activities such as:
  - BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation Uncovering Common Ground Project which distributed classroom growing kits 25 First Nations and 25 public/independent schools dispersed across the province in January 2022

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- Farm to School BC Learning from the Land Toolkit which was released in October 2021 at the Classrooms to Communities professional day event

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. provides unique, Indigenous specific programming and technical staff support that is not currently offered by all provinces. Other provinces provide similar business development support through their CAP programs, but it is not tailored to Indigenous peoples.
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada launched an Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative and Indigenous Pathfinding Service in 2018 for Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs launching agriculture and food systems projects and others who want to build their capacity to participate in the Canadian agriculture and agriculture food sector.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- \$150,000 is allocated to Indigenous Agriculture Development Program from the CAP Business Development budget. Indigenous producers and processors are also eligible for other programs under CAP and other programs delivered by AGRI.
- \$30,000 was allocated to the Xatsūll Ranch Transition project to support the successful transfer, and subsequent operation, of a ranching operation included in the negotiation of the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw Treaty.
- The Indigenous Agriculture Inventory Project, completed in 2021, was allocated \$27,000 in CAP Business Development funding and leveraged \$20,000 from the Investment Agriculture Foundation. An additional \$35,000 of Indigenous Funding Envelope (IFE) supplemented the project in 2020/21 to allow additional research, engagement, and reporting.
- \$63,000 in CAP Business Development funding to 4-H BC for specialized programs focused on urban and Indigenous youth, as well as farm safety initiatives.

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## Indigenous Agriculture – First Nations Negotiations

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- B.C.'s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* established the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the Province's framework for reconciliation. It is a Provincial mandate priority to further lasting and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.
- The protection of farmland in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a mandate priority for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF).
- During treaty negotiations that involve land transfers to First Nations, AFF works with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) to assess the agricultural suitability and capability of ALR-designated land and make recommendations.
- When the preservation of the ALR for agricultural use is not possible at a treaty negotiation table, AFF seeks to facilitate continued agricultural use of prime agricultural lands, when and if appropriate.
- AFF also supports First Nations governments, organizations, and entrepreneurs to succeed in the agriculture and food sector through the B.C. Indigenous Agricultural Development Program and other Ministry programs and staff resources.

### BACKGROUND:

- MIRR leads and represents the Province in the development and implementation of First Nations agreements. Negotiations for an agreement may include cash, land, and other components to establish a new treaty or to amend an established treaty.
- The land component of a negotiation may involve Crown land to meet established needs for shortfall lands (often referred to as a Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE)) for an established treaty and/or additional lands that are negotiated either for a new treaty or as part of the TLE negotiations.
- Site C Tripartite Land Agreements (TLA) between the Province, BC Hydro and four Treaty 8 First Nations accommodate adverse effects of the Site C Project on Treaty 8 rights through the fee simple transfer of lands to the Nations.
- Crown land, including ALR-designated land, can be transferred to Nations in different ways:
  - Land may be transferred to Canada using treaty settlement legislation to create federal Indian Reserves (IR). The *Agricultural Land Commission Act* (ALCA) no longer applies to IR land, and these parcels are removed from the ALR.
  - Land may transfer in fee simple to Nations. This land is subject to existing laws, bylaws, and zoning regulations similar to any other private property. The ALCA continues to apply, and land remains in the ALR.
- When a First Nation(s) agreement negotiation involves the transfer of land, AFF provide line agency comments on agricultural and aquaculture interests through MIRR's Land

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Analysis Table (LAT) process. AFF staff are currently reviewing the internal AFF process for providing line agency comments to MIRR.

- The Natural Resources Sector has an established DM-to-DM memo sign-off process for land selection when Provincial agreement negotiations are completed and the outcome for parcels of land is agreed upon by line agencies.
- Policy approaches may take priority over or guide line-agency LAT reviews. For example, MIRR and AFF jointly agreed on a policy approach in July 2020 to transfer up to 10,572 hectares of ALR land to five Treaty 8 TLE First Nations as IR land (this includes shortfall and additional lands). As of February 2022, DM-to-DM memos approving land transfers have been signed for four of the five TLE Treaty 8 Nations.
- Several First Nations in treaty negotiations are proposing treaty clauses that would remove the ALR designation from their lands through treaty settlement legislation. These proposals vary and are currently being approached on a table-by-table basis, recognizing the variability in First Nations' lands.
- MIRR and AFF staff are actively working together on a guiding policy for dealing with ALR land in First Nation land negotiations and addressing the proposals of First Nations in treaty negotiations.
- Removal of land from the ALR impacts the contiguous nature of the ALR, which is significant as agricultural activity becomes more vulnerable when it is next to land that is used for other purposes. Conflict can occur between non-farming and farming activities. Transfer of certain parcels out of the ALR could have greater or lesser impacts depending on the parcel's agricultural capability and suitability, accounting for neighboring agricultural uses.
- AFF staff work with MIRR treaty implementation teams to support successful treaty implementation.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. is the only jurisdiction in Canada with an agriculture-specific designation that recognizes agriculture as the priority use through legislation. Ontario also protects farmland, as well as forests, wetlands, rivers, and lakes through the *Greenbelt Act*. However, Ontario is covered by 46 existing treaties and other agreements signed between 1781 and 1930.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- N/A

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## Indigenous Agriculture – B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- AFF has collaboratively developed an Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) with 12 representatives from Indigenous Nations across B.C. and formalized this Advisory Council in June 2021.
- IACAF's purpose is to allow the Ministry to better understand priorities, strengthen opportunities and reduce barriers for Indigenous nations, communities, organizations, and entrepreneurs to achieve their goals in the agriculture and food sector, and work at a strategic level to implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) as the framework for reconciliation in B.C.
- IACAF developed a 3-year strategic plan which includes three priority areas:
  - Strengthen Indigenous food security, food sovereignty, and build food system resilience,
  - Address barriers and create economic opportunities in food and agriculture,
  - Foster inclusive Indigenous governance and support self-determination.
- IACAF meets as a full Council quarterly and sub-groups meet as needed for specific initiatives.
- Discussions to date have focused on:
  - Building trust and understanding through the sharing of priorities, perspectives, and experiences in the food and agriculture sector.
  - The regional and cultural diversity across nations, and urban and rural members and the importance of a distinctions-based approach.
  - IACAF's contribution in the development of the next federal-provincial agricultural policy framework.
  - Implementation of year 1 actions in the Strategic Plan.
- Through strong relationships built on trust, understanding and respect, we strive to work together to support Indigenous peoples' agriculture and food economies, food security, and self-determination and advance the implementation of *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' Act (DRIPA)* within the Ministry's mandate.

### BACKGROUND:

- Work started in Spring 2019 to form the IACAF (formerly the Minister's Indigenous Advisory Group on Agriculture) to create an opportunity for dialogue on reconciliation in the land-based food and agriculture sector; the Council was formalized June 2021.
- IACAF is a platform for the Ministry and members to work together to enhance the equitable participation of Indigenous peoples in the land-based agriculture and food

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sector as part of the Province's reconciliation commitments. IACAF is intended to provide strategic advice, recommend priorities, and offer guidance to the Ministry.

- IACAF's three identified priority areas are:
  1. Strengthen Indigenous food security and food sovereignty and build food system resilience.
  2. Address barriers and create economic opportunities, to increase success and participation in the sector.
  3. Strengthen and inform the Ministry's understanding of Indigenous peoples' inherent rights, interests, and perspectives as they relate to the sector to foster inclusive Indigenous governance and support self-determination.
- The members met virtually with Minister and Ministry Executive in June 2021 and February 2022 with the November 2021 meeting canceled due to the flooding event.
- The final 2021-22 IACAF meeting will be a virtual/in-person, in Victoria, mid-March 2022.
- An engagement session on the Province's Declaration Act Action Plan was held with IACAF in January 2021, which informed the priority actions put forward by MAFF for consideration by MIRR for inclusion in the Action Plan.
- The IACAF 2021-22 membership included 12 Indigenous representatives from 11 First Nations and 1 Métis Society, the majority of whom are elected representatives (5 Chiefs, 2 Councilors, 1 Métis Society President). Other members are technical staff such as the President of the First Nations Agriculture Association. The Membership will be renewed for 2022/23 and two youth members added.
- Quarterly meetings are planned for 2022-23 to continue relationship building, joint-learning opportunities, building shared understanding, and implementing actions related to IACAF's priority areas in the Strategic Plan.
- For additional information on AFF's initiatives to implement DRIPA and support Indigenous food and agriculture development see:
  - *Estimates Note on Indigenous Agriculture Development*
  - *Estimates Note on First Nations Negotiations*
  - *Estimates Note on Indigenous Agriculture - UNDRIP Implementation*

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- IACAF is unique in Canada as the only provincial- or territorial-level Indigenous advisory body on food and agriculture.
- In B.C., other Indigenous advisory groups have been established in recent years to support other areas of government include:
  - Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation's (MIRR) Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (est. 2011) to advise on how to improve Indigenous women in B.C.'s quality of life
  - Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy's Indigenous Climate Adaptation Technical Working Group (est. 2019).

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- Several First Nations Industry Advisory Boards and Councils (e.g. BC First Nations Forestry Council and BC First Nations Fisheries Council) represent interests and perspectives in other sectors.
- Federally, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada works with Indigenous organizations and has been building relationships with Indigenous peoples through outreach sessions (undertaken across Canada in 2017) and a position for a First Nations Elder on-staff. An Indigenous Advisory Committee was also established in 2019 to provide advice to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- AFF accessed \$300,000 in funding from the Indigenous Funding Program (IFP), managed by MIRR, to support the functions of the IACAF and the implementation of the Council’s 3-year strategic plan in FY21/22.
- Advice/Recommendations

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## Indigenous Agriculture – *Declaration Act* Implementation

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)* obligates the B.C. Government to
  - (1) prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),
  - (2) align B.C.'s laws with UNDRIP, and
  - (3) report on progress on both obligations above annually.

### Draft Action Plan

- An Action Plan for the implementation of *Declaration Act*, built through discussions with First Nations and other Indigenous partners, was released for public engagement in June 2021. The final Action Plan will be publicly released at the end of March 2022.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) continues to participate in the cross-government work to develop the government's action plan to achieve the objectives of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. The action plan will reflect priorities identified in the collaboration with Indigenous people and supplement ongoing reconciliation work.
- The 5-year *Declaration Act* Action Plan contains several goals and outcomes directly related to food and agriculture, including:
  - Indigenous peoples exercise and have full enjoyment of their rights, including the rights of First Nations to own, use, develop and control lands and resources within their territories in B.C. (Theme 2, Goal).
  - Indigenous food systems are recognized and supported in their foundational and interconnected role in providing for cultural, social, environmental, and economic well-being (Theme 4, Outcome).
  - Respect for Indigenous cultures is tangibly demonstrated through Indigenous maintenance, control, protection and development of their cultural heritage resources, intellectual property, art, spiritual traditions, knowledge systems, economic systems, food systems and spiritual and sacred sites (Theme 4, Outcome).
- The Action Plan contains two actions specific related to AFF:
  - Lead work with the federal government to develop new strategies to protect and revitalize B.C.'s wild salmon populations, including the development and implementation of a cohesive B.C. Wild Pacific Salmon Strategy. This action has been initiated:
    - Work on BC's Wild Salmon Strategy and Action Plan has been initiated. Strategy options and materials for Cabinet consideration are currently under development. These options were developed with confidential input from key partners including the First Nations Fisheries Council.

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- AFF is continuing to support wild salmon and habitat restoration through the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF).
- Implementation of this action will move to the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship and AFF will continue to support through the Industry Specialist Team.
- Work with the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food (IACAF) and other Indigenous partners to identify opportunities to strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector. This action has been initiated:
  - IACAF was formalized in June 2021 and inaugural IACAF membership is comprised of First Nations leaders from across regions of the Province nominated and appointed by the Minister for a 1-year term.
  - IACAF developed a year Strategic Plan (2021-2024) and initial activities were implemented over fiscal 21/22 and implementation will continue over 22/23 and 23/24.
- AFF is currently leveraging existing Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programs and services to collaborate with and support the development of Indigenous food and agriculture businesses and initiatives.
  - Opportunities to further leverage existing program expenditures for Indigenous food and agriculture initiatives are being explored.
  - Some examples include supporting marketing and branding through Buy BC program, supporting institutional procurement through Feed BC program, working in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous leaders on the development of new funding programs, etc.
- AFF has three full-time staff dedicated to building partnerships and supporting Indigenous food and agriculture initiatives through access to technical expertise, industry connections, cross-jurisdiction partnerships, and program funding.

Alignment of Laws

- AFF is reviewing its legislation for inconsistency with UNDRIP and developing its plan for engagement with Indigenous Peoples to explore options for better alignment with UNDRIP.

Other Ministry Actions

- AFF participates in reconciliation committees (DM Committee, ADM Reconciliation Committee, Champions Committee) to develop and coordinate principles, as well as prioritize and align actions across the Natural Resource sector.
- AFF *Declaration Act* Internal Working Group is leading the Learning for Reconciliation (L4R) initiative, which supports professional development and training for all AFF staff in Indigenous history, rights, and relations to inform action on AFF's commitment to align legislation, policies, and programs with UNDRIP and to advance reconciliation.

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**BACKGROUND:**

- On November 26, 2019, *Declaration Act*, passed unanimously. The legislation established UNDRIP as the foundational framework for reconciliation in B.C., as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- AFF is committed to the success of *Declaration Act* and advancing the principles that UNDRIP articulates by ensuring Indigenous peoples are part of the policy and decision-making processes that affect them and have equitable access to AFF services and programs.
- Section 3 of *Declaration Act* relates to measures to align laws with UNDRIP, known as Alignment of Laws:
  - “In consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, the government must take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with UNDRIP.”
- AFF staff have reviewed all the ministry’s Acts and Regulations (24 Acts, which include 65 Regulations) for initial assessment for inconsistency with UNDRIP and the minister has identified that the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, and the *Natural Products Marketing Act* as Acts prioritized for an alignment of laws review.
- AFF staff are developing its engagement approach with First Nations that it will use for the policy development and implementation of the alignment of laws project.

Treaty and Reconciliation Agreements

- During treaty negotiations that involve land transfers to First Nations, AFF works with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) to assess the agricultural suitability and capability of ALR-designated land and make recommendations (*see Estimates Note on First Nations Negotiations*).

Economic Development and Job Creation

- AFF supports business planning and increased capacity with Indigenous governments, organizations, and entrepreneurs through the Indigenous Agriculture Development Program (*see FBB Estimate Note on Indigenous Agriculture Development*).

Broughton Archipelago Agreement

- Emerged from government-to-government talks with First Nations in the Broughton to work collaboratively to develop shared recommendations to protect and restore wild salmon stocks, allow an orderly transition from open-pen finfish aquaculture in the Broughton and create a more sustainable future for local communities.
- On June 27, 2018, the consent-based G2G process regarding salmon aquaculture in the Broughton Area was formalized in a letter of understanding (LOU) to which the Province and the ‘Namgis, Kwikwasut’inuxw Haxwa’mis and Mamalilikulla First Nations are signatories. The joint decision-making process resulted in a December 2018 agreement to protect and restore wild salmon stocks and create a more sustainable future for local communities and workers.

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- Achievements to date include:
  - The Nations, along with Cermaq Canada and Mowi Canada West, have reached a landmark agreement through the Broughton First Nations Indigenous Monitoring and Inspection Plan (IMIP) establishing First Nations oversight of salmon farms operating in their territories during the orderly transition of salmon farms in the area.
  - The transition has commenced with the decommissioning of six 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 not valid Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) licenses in place, they will also cease operations.

Salmon Aquaculture Policy

- On June 20, 2022 BC's salmon aquaculture tenure policy comes into effect. This policy was designed to allow First Nations to have a role in the decision-making process on salmon farm tenures in their territories.
  - The policy makes it clear that, effective June 2022, no new tenures will be approved unless:
    - The fish farm operator has negotiated agreements with the First Nation(s) in whose territory they propose to operate; and
    - The operator can satisfy Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) that their farm will not adversely impact wild salmon stocks.
  - This approach provides clarity to industry and outlines our expectations moving forward for a sustainable industry that protects wild salmon, embraces reconciliation, and provides good jobs for local communities.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In 2019, B.C. became the first province to introduce law with respect to UNDRIP, through *Declaration Act*.
- On June 21, 2021, the federal *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* received Royal Assent and came into force.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- AFF accessed \$300,000 in funding from the Indigenous Funding Program (IFP) to support the functions of IACAF and the implementation of its 3-year strategic plan in FY21/22.
  - Advice/Recommendations
- AFF, along with MIRR, FLNR and ENV, had shared access to \$985K in IFP funding in 21/22 to support implementation of the First Nations Fisheries Council MOU and

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associated work, including capacity support for the wild salmon strategy. Staff are preparing a similar agreement with IFP funding for 2022/23.

- The IFP funding is 100% recoverable from MIRR.
- AFF expended \$194,060 from our CAP business development budget, \$8,000 from Buy BC budget for a promotional video and \$25,000 from Feed BC budget specifically on Indigenous food and agriculture development initiatives in FY21/22 (*note that we do not currently track Indigenous participation in all Ministry program funding areas*).

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**INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT****RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to create tremendous pressure and challenges for businesses across British Columbia (B.C.), as efforts to contain the spread of the virus have resulted in decreased revenues and fragile supply chains that created complexity with moving goods in and out of the province.
- Our government has committed to continue to work together with British Columbians to build back a more resilient StrongerBC, and this continues to include supporting businesses as they pivot and adapt throughout the pandemic to ensure food is brought to our tables and to those around the global marketplace, as food is a huge part of our economy.
- This is why our ministry continues to work together with the B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation (JERI) and the federal government to ensure that industry has access to supports at home and abroad to develop, maintain, and grow markets for their products through targeted business-to-business matchmaking and in-market promotional activities with support from overseas provincial and federal trade representatives.
- This will ensure that B.C.'s farmers, harvesters, producers, and processors have the support they need to connect with buyers in key markets and build back their businesses to be more resilient than ever.

**BACKGROUND:**

- Cost-Shared Funding for Industry-led Activities
  - The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) provides \$1,000,000 per year through the B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program to support industry-led market research, marketing/export plans, and export-focused market development activities.
  - In 2021/22, 33 new projects were supported, examples of approved projects include the following:
    - \$34,000 to Big Mountain Foods to conduct market research to identify their customer base in Canada and the United States, and for product promotions online and in Kruger stores across the United States.
    - \$50,000 to B.C. Fresh Vegetables Inc. to conduct market development activities to raise brand awareness across Canada.
    - \$8,250 to Kalala Organic Estate Winery to conduct market research and market development planning to expand product sales into Alberta.
- International Tradeshows/Events
  - AFF and JERI support industry participation and promotion of B.C. food/beverages at large international tradeshows/events each year through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
  - The COVID-19 pandemic has created ongoing disruptions to tradeshows and in-market activities, leading to shows being cancelled, postponed, or pivoting to virtual only formats as the virus continues to change.

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- As a result, AFF together with JERI will continue to flexibly adapt our approach to provide the following:
  - Organize tradeshow and smaller/targeted in-market promotions and business to business matchmaking events, both virtually and in-person; and
  - Maintain a B.C. booth space presence at critical tradeshow where the federal government does not have a presence (i.e. Seafood Expo North America in Boston and Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim), as well as tradeshow where B.C.'s fish and seafood industry are ineligible to apply for federal funding support under the Canada Pavilion Program (i.e. Seafood Expo Global in Barcelona).

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) Market Development budget is approximately \$2,480,000 annually, which includes support for both domestic and international market development. This includes \$1,930,000 in federal funding through the CAP agreement with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as well as a \$560,000 provincial base funding contribution.
- In 2022/23, approximately 65% of this budget (\$1.6M) is allocated to support international market development, including:
  - \$1,000,000 in cost-shared funding through the B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program to support industry-led market research, marketing/export plans and export market development activities; and
  - \$580,000 to support government-led export activities, events, and promotions, and export market research, market readiness and market access activities.

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## Agricultural TFW Quarantine Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) have become increasingly critical to the B.C. agricultural sector due to a growing unmet labour need within the sector that is not being filled by domestic workforce participation.
- The Ministry continues to support the agriculture, seafood and food processing sector's labour needs by working with the relevant parties (consulates, federal government, industry) to ensure on-going access to TFWs.
- The Province continues to provide support until March 31, 2022 by funding hotel, food-service costs, laundry services, wellness walks, interpretation and translation services, health screening, and other necessary supports for TFWs during the federally-mandated quarantine period.
- Until March 31, 2022, unvaccinated or partially vaccinated TFWs are required to quarantine for a 14-day period before proceeding to their worksite. Fully vaccinated TFWs are required to quarantine a) if they are selected for Mandatory Random Testing (MRT) at their first point of entry and b) until they receive a negative test result (2-3 days).
- As announced on February 15, 2022, federal quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated TFWs selected for MRT will end effective February 28, 2022. This will reduce TFW Quarantine Program intake by approximately 97% (as Program data indicates that 97% of agricultural TFWs entering B.C. are fully vaccinated).
- Until March 31, 2022, all TFWs arriving to work in B.C. and who are required to quarantine federally (i.e., the 3% of TFWs are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated), must do so in government-managed accommodations prior to being transported to farms throughout B.C.
- The Province has received over 15,000 TFWs since the program started in April 2020, mostly originating from Mexico, Guatemala and Jamaica.
- As of March 23, 2022, there have been 230 COVID positive cases detected since April 2020 when the quarantine program commenced, resulting in the prevention of outbreaks on farms (all of these workers have recovered and exited the program).
- AFF inspectors inspected over 2300 TFW housing sites for compliance with COVID-19 health requirements.
- In 2021, more than 6300 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were administered to TFWs as they departed quarantine, making a major contribution to the 97% vaccination rate observed in arriving TFWs this year.
- While Provincial support for quarantining arriving TFWs has now ended, support for the self-isolation of TFWs through the B.C. Farm Worker Safe Isolation Program is continuing into 2023.

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**BACKGROUND:**

- The Province introduced the TFW Quarantine Program in April 2020 to allow TFWs to safely quarantine upon arrival to Canada as required by the federal *Quarantine Act*, an acknowledgement that most employer-provided housing for TFWs does not meet quarantine requirements.
- In 2021, AFF partnered with BCCDC and VCH to offer a dose of COVID-19 vaccine to TFWs departing the TFW Quarantine Program.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- PEI is the only other province with a centralized TFW quarantine program. In other provinces, it is the employer's responsibility to satisfy the federal quarantine requirements.
- In Ontario, a decentralized, employer-led approach resulted in 5 COVID-related TFW deaths, dozens of outbreaks, and thousands of infections.
- Outcomes in Ontario disrupted the flow of TFWs to workplaces on multiple occasions. For example, after multiple TFW deaths in 2020, the Government of Mexico temporarily suspended the arrival of TFWs to Ontario.
- More recently, in January 2022, the Southern Ontario public health district made an announcement blocking the entry of TFWs into the district. The decision was only reversed after the Province agreed to fund centralized self-isolation spaces.
- Recent FPT calls have revealed that provinces without centralized quarantine programs are unable to determine what percentage of arriving TFWs are fully vaccinated.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- On February 24, 2021, Treasury Board approved \$9.4M for Program costs incurred during 2020/21 and also approved-in-principle access to up to \$37.5M for quarantine and inspection costs for 2021/22. Funding for the Labour Unit is contingent on the TFW Quarantine Program.
- Program costs are approximately \$3,000 per worker for the 14-day period or \$640 per worker for the 3-day period.
- Advice/Recommendations

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## Agricultural TFW Quarantine Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Agricultural Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) have become increasingly critical to the B.C. agricultural sector due to a growing unmet labour need within the sector that is not being filled by domestic workforce participation.
- The Ministry continues to support the agriculture, seafood and food processing sector's labour needs by working with the relevant parties (consulates, federal government, industry) to ensure on-going access to TFWs.
- The Province continues to provide support for 2022 by funding hotel, food-service costs, laundry services, wellness walks, interpretation and translation services, health screening, and other necessary supports for TFWs during the federally-mandated quarantine period.
- Currently, unvaccinated or partially vaccinated TFWs are required to quarantine for a 14-day period before proceeding to their worksite. Fully vaccinated TFWs are required to quarantine a) if they are selected for Mandatory Random Testing (MRT) at their first point of entry and b) until they receive a negative test result (2-3 days).
- As announced on February 15, 2022 federal quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated TFWs selected for MRT will end effective February 28, 2022. This will reduce TFW Quarantine Program intake by approximately 97% (as Program data indicates that 97% of agricultural TFWs entering B.C. are fully vaccinated).
- Until March 31, 2022, all TFWs arriving to work in B.C. and who are required to quarantine federally (i.e., the 3% of TFWs are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated), must do so in government-managed accommodations prior to being transported to farms throughout B.C.
- The Province has received over 14,200 TFWs since the program started in April 2020, mostly originating from Mexico, Guatemala and Jamaica.
- As of February 15, 2022, there have been 223 COVID positive cases detected since April 2020 when the quarantine program commenced, resulting in the prevention of outbreaks on farms (203 of these workers have recovered and exited the program while 10 remain in the care of the program).

### BACKGROUND:

- The Province introduced the TFW Quarantine Program in April 2020 to allow TFWs to safely quarantine upon arrival to Canada as required by the federal *Quarantine Act*, an acknowledgement that most employer-provided housing for TFWs does not meet quarantine requirements.
- In 2021, AFF partnered with BCCDC and VCH to offer a dose of COVID-19 vaccine to TFWs departing the TFW Quarantine Program.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- PEI is the only other province with a centralized TFW quarantine program. In other provinces, it is the employer's responsibility to satisfy the federal quarantine requirements.
- In Ontario, a decentralized, employer-led approach resulted in 5 COVID-related TFW deaths, dozens of outbreaks, and thousands of infections.
- Outcomes in Ontario disrupted the flow of TFWs to workplaces on multiple occasions. For example, after multiple TFW deaths in 2020, the Government of Mexico temporarily suspended the arrival of TFWs to Ontario.
- More recently, in January 2022, the Southern Ontario public health district made an announcement blocking the entry of TFWs into the district. The decision was only reversed after the Province agreed to fund centralized self-isolation spaces.
- Recent FPT calls have revealed that provinces without centralized quarantine programs are unable to determine what percentage of arriving TFWs are fully vaccinated.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- On February 24, 2021, Treasury Board approved \$9.4M for Program costs incurred during 2020/21 and also approved-in-principle access to up to \$37.5M for quarantine and inspection costs for 2021/22. Funding for the Labour Unit is contingent on the TFW Quarantine Program.
- Program costs are approximately \$3,000 per worker for the 14-day period or \$640 per worker for the 3-day period.
- The Labour Unit is seeking a mandate to develop an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy which will include aspects of TFW health and safety measures (such as establishing a permanent inspection team model for employer provided housing ideally through a delegation from the federal government).

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## Domestic Farm Workers

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Temporary seasonal workers, both interprovincial and international, are a vital part of BC's food chain security and agriculture industry.
- AFF initiated a Domestic Farm Worker (DFW) Steering Committee consisting of local and regional governments, Interior Health Authority, fruit growing industry associations, and the Province to develop and implement a coordinated regional response, including the management of designated temporary DFW camp sites.
- AFF established shared cost arrangements with the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS), the Town of Creston and the District of Summerland to support the workcamp establishment, operations, and COVID-19 safety protocols.
- AFF also entered into a contribution agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada to support the costs of self-isolation of farm workers who are diagnosed as COVID-positive or deemed a close contact.
- Both investments served to safeguard the health and wellbeing of DFWs during the harvest season to ensure a sufficient and healthy workforce for the Okanagan area. The availability and the health and safety of DFWs has business and economic impacts for the individual workers who rely on the income, for the farmers who rely on the labour at critical harvest periods and has impacts to the food supply and other businesses along the supply chain if crops cannot be harvested.

### BACKGROUND:

- Every summer, approximately 1,000-1,500 DFWs from other parts of Canada (mainly from Quebec and Ontario) arrive in B.C. to work in agricultural jobs. Most of this work is on fruit farms in the Okanagan and Creston Valley.
- DFWs have historically stayed in a mix of campsites, on-farm camping, and camping in undesignated areas. Municipal elected officials have expressed concern that COVID-19 outbreaks could be caused by these workers as they tend to live communally in tents and gather in groups in the small-town municipal centers.
- Regional governments have allowed camping in certain sites such as the Loose Bay camp site (Crown Land/ALR near Oliver) in previous years, however there were insufficient amenities to meet the COVID-19 public health orders and guidelines and ensure worker and community safety.
- In 2020, AFF spent \$421,825.85 to support 3 workcamps, self-isolation and outbreak locations and protocol, and an on-farm PPE and sanitation upgrade program.
- Approximately \$150,000 of the \$200,000 Provincial funding contribution to RDOS went towards permanent upgrades to Loose Bay (septic, showers, wash stations,

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Wi-Fi access) that will continue to provide benefit over the long term.

- The Summerland and Creston campsites were rentals and the Provincial funding commitment supported temporary infrastructure (wash station, showers, waste disposal, site coordinators) that enabled COVID-19 public health orders and guidelines to be met at the campsites and to support worker and public safety.
- The PHO Order for Industrial Camps was issued on April 23, 2020 and updated on July 2, 2020. The order applies to all employers, Infection and Prevention Control Coordinators and workers in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors and applies to all employers offering employee accommodation in any amount and on or off-site.
- The agriculture sector is unique from other natural resource sectors as there are dispersed, minimal serviced & communal work camps, where workers move amongst communities and employers flowing the crop harvest. Many workers stay on farms. The Okanagan and Creston valley regions are the main areas where there are significant number of seasonal migrant workers. The DFW program focused uniquely on the Okanagan and Creston Valley for this reason.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- In June 2021, Treasury Board approved AFF's request to access up to \$0.652M from Pandemic and Recovery Contingencies in 2021/22 to fund facility upgrades and temporary COVID-19 camp coordinators at the Loose Bay and Summerland domestic farm worker camps, and to fund on-farm sanitation upgrades for farmers.
- AFF was also approved to sign a contribution agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) whereby the federal government would provide up to \$4.150 million in 2021/22 to fund the full costs of a new, temporary BC Farm Worker Safe Isolation Program.
- These funds were set to expire March 31, 2022 but PHAC recently announced its intention to extend funding until March 31, 2023. .Cabinet Confidences;  
Cabinet Confidences; Advice/Recommendations

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## Temporary Foreign Worker Housing and Inspections

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Since the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Quarantine Program started in April 2020, over 2,100 employer-provided housing sites have been inspected and found compliant by Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) Provincial Infection Prevention and Control Officers (PIPICO).
- Inspections of employer-provided housing were required to be conducted while unvaccinated TFWs are in quarantine to ensure that employers have adequate infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols in place.
- In 2022, employer-provided housing sites where unvaccinated or partially vaccinated workers will be residing are required to pass a pre-occupancy inspection. Fully vaccinated workers' accommodation does not need to be inspected for compliance with COVID-19 protocols.
- Improving TFW housing is a main objective of the ministry and the Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy.
- The ministry is engaged in discussions with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which currently holds the authority to conduct pre-season TFW housing inspections as well as investigate and sanction employers who contravene housing responsibilities under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.
- The ministry is also undertaking work to streamline the existing TFW housing inspection process which currently involves approximately 11 different agencies.

### BACKGROUND:

- AFF staff are designated PIPCOs under the Industrial Camps Regulation Order issued by the Provincial Health Officer.
- AFF staff have delegated authority to inspect on-farm accommodations to ensure compliance with COVID-related requirements; this delegation was necessary because Environmental Health Officers could not conduct inspections due to pandemic-related staffing pressures.
- On-farm inspections were mandatory to ensure that TFWs would be living in safe and COVID-compliant accommodations once they departed from the government quarantine program.
- Under B.C.'s permanent regulatory framework (without public health orders), AFF has no regulatory authority or responsibility for on-farm accommodation or agriculture labour oversight. Policy review is required to confirm whether changes are necessary and/or desired by government.

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- Agencies/jurisdictions that have oversight responsibilities related to on-farm labour include: BC Health Authorities, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Service Canada, WorkSafeBC, and the BC Employment Standards Branch (Ministry of Labour).
- Cabinet Committee and Cabinet review is required before a permanent program model can be supported and considered for funding.
- A delegation of authority for housing inspections and enforcement is being discussed with Employment and Social Development Canada and improvements to the existing inspections process are identified as a main objective in the Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- On February 24, 2021, Treasury Board approved in-principle access to up to \$37.5M for 2021/22 quarantine and inspection costs, of which \$1.4M was allotted for inspections.
- If federal quarantine requirements remain in place past April 1, 2022, AFF is approved to continue delivering the program but must return to the Chair of Treasury Board by June 1, 2022, with a submission that estimates 2022/23 costs, and provides options on the future management of this issue including assessment of roles and responsibilities of all parties (including farmers and Canada) and considers program termination.
- The funding and function of the PIPCOs is contingent on PHO Orders that rapidly change based on new developments related to the pandemic.

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## Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- AFF is seeking a mandate to proceed with the development and execution of an Agriculture and Seafood Workforce Strategy.
- The Strategy supports the Workforce Readiness Framework being developed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) and aligns with the goals of “implementing sector-specific workforce strategies” and “enhancing worker protections to reflect changing ways of work.”
- The Strategy also has linkages to the federal government’s commitment to develop an Agriculture Labour Strategy and the New Policy Framework, which has identified labour as a new category eligible for funding.
- AFF is providing in-kind support to a sector-specific labour strategy following the recommendations of the Tree Fruit Stabilization Project (TFSP). The TFSP also recommends the development of a ministry-led workforce strategy.
- AFF has invested \$175K into policy work to inform Strategy development.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Minister’s mandate letter includes a commitment “to, in the context of COVID-19, improve food security and the safety of workers by continuing to improve conditions for temporary foreign workers (TFWs) and temporary domestic farm workers in farming communities, with support from the Minister of Labour.”
- AFF does not have a formal role in agriculture labour and requires a mandate to develop and implement the Strategy.
- The Ministry is funding three projects to support and inform Strategy development:
  - 1) Wage Analysis (contract amount: \$50,000, timeline: March 31, 2022)
    - a. Economic analysis to determine profit margins for farms in B.C. These findings will allow the Province to objectively determine if it is reasonable to expect industry to pay workers more than minimum wage (which may increase the recruitment/retention of B.C. residents into the workforce).
    - b. Findings will also determine if profit margins are too tight to pay beyond minimum wage, in which case the Province could consider subsidies and/or alternative solution to address wage challenges.
    - c. The economic analysis will examine potential impacts of a wage subsidy on other sectors and provide considerations for developing criteria and parameters for a wage subsidy program.
  - 2) Agriculture Labour Survey (Contract amount: \$100,000, timeline: March 31, 2022)
    - a. The Ministry engaged BC Stats to conduct an online survey of businesses to gather data on jobs, wages, labour shortages and other labour market

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indicators by commodity for B.C.'s agricultural and aquaculture/fishing sectors.

- b. The survey will be open from mid-February to end of March. Under the Information Sharing Agreement with BC Stats, the Ministry will receive the individual responses to the survey and the Sector Insights and Corporate Initiatives Unit in AFF will analyze the survey results.
- 3) Economic Impact Analysis (Contract amount: \$25,200, timeline: March 31, 2022)
- a. Development of a framework that describes, summarizes and further analyzes the economic impacts of B.C.'s agriculture and seafood sectors by providing statistical and analytical expertise and using the B.C. Input/Output Model (BCIOM) to support the ministry's strategic priorities and interests.
  - b. The focus of the economic impacts analysis will be job creation and increase to wages, as well as increase to GDP and increase to provincial tax revenue if there's an increase to output in the B.C.'s agriculture and seafood sector.
  - c. This framework will be the foundation for future modification by AFF staff to meet different needs including impacts by industry, by commodity or by region of changes in output. The eventual development of such framework for AFF would involve licensing of the BCIOM and training by the contractor for ministry staff, as part of a potential future contract.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Several provinces (Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador) and industry associations (Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and Food and Beverage Canada) are working on labour strategies for the agriculture and agri-food sectors.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- AFF has invested \$175K into policy work to inform Strategy development.
- AFF is working with AEST to identify shared and separate initiatives. It is anticipated that AEST will address systemic challenges faced by multiple ministry and sectors (i.e.: transportation, housing, subsidies/bursaries, childcare, etc.).
- AFF's Strategy will be streamlined to request funding for challenges that are unique to the agriculture workforce. The remaining initiatives will be proposed for funding through the Workforce Readiness Framework or any federal funding opportunities.

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## Livestock Watering Developments

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- A livestock watering (LSW) policy proposal was jointly developed by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), the Ministry of Environment (ENV) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) in 2020 to recognize the livestock sectors' historical water use.
- The policy proposal included three tiers of authorization based on water volumes and exempting low volume use.
- Due to scheduling legislative priorities for the new government mandate, and the fact that the ranching sector has been unable to consolidate support for the livestock watering legislative proposal, the Province will not be advancing development of amendments at this time.
- LSW policy will be revisited as progress is made on the Watershed Security Strategy and Fund (WSS&F), the organizational review of FLNRORD and *Declaration Act* implementation.
- Government will continue to work with Indigenous peoples to align the LSW policy development with the *Declaration Act* and to advance reconciliation.
- Ranchers were encouraged to apply for recognition of their historical groundwater use before the March 1, 2022, end of the WSA existing use groundwater transition period.
- Ranchers applying for surface water licences can receive priority dates based on date of application but without volume exemptions or historical use recognition.

### BACKGROUND:

- Most ranchers using extensive rangelands (private and Crown) lack *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) authorization to divert and use surface water needed for their livestock.
- The BC Cattlemen's Association (BCCA) lobbied government to change policy to recognize their historical use of water on extensive rangelands.
- A policy proposal was developed to recognize the livestock sectors' historical water use through three tiers of authorization based on water volumes and exempting low volume use.
- Engagement with Indigenous Nations and key stakeholder groups on the proposed policy proposal occurred in June 2020, followed by broader public notification in July 2020.
- In 2020, a Request for Decision to amend the WSA was notionally endorsed by the Environment and Land Use Committee and a Request for Legislation was drafted.
- Despite the engagement with BCCA throughout the policy development and a proposal that is largely responsive to their requests, BCCA members were not unanimously supporting the proposal, as a segment (particularly in northern B.C.) was opposed to government regulation.

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- Government’s new priorities include developing a Watershed Security Strategy and Fund (WSS&F), creating a new natural resources agency structure and new ministry (Lands and Natural Resource Operations – LNRO) and further aligning legislation with the *Declaration Act*.
- Deputy Ministers from ENV and FLNRORD have directed the LSW policy proposal be deferred until progress is made on the WSS&F, LNRO and *Declaration Act* implementation.
- The LSW policy development predated the *Declaration Act* and government’s approach aligned with principles of Indigenous reconciliation. Although significant Indigenous engagement was undertaken, the policy proposal was not co-developed with Indigenous Nations and may raise long standing Indigenous concerns regarding recognition of their historical use of water.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Not applicable.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Not applicable.

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## Market Impacts on Raspberries

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- British Columbia (B.C.) is the largest raspberry producing province in Canada.
- The B.C. raspberry industry has been decreasing in size over the past three decades due to high costs of production and increased global competition.
- Extreme heat caused by the heat dome impacted the 2021 B.C. raspberry crop.
- The Ministry is supporting the raspberry industry through a Raspberry Replant Program to incentivize the planting of raspberry varieties suitable for fresh and Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) markets.
- The Ministry is supporting the berry industry to develop competitive berry production practices through Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) funding.
- The Ministry has a full time Industry Specialist to work with the berry industry.
- The Province is helping to build domestic and export markets for B.C. foods.

### BACKGROUND:

- British Columbia (B.C.) produces approximately 72 percent of the Canadian raspberry crop on 54 percent of the acreage.
- It is estimated that there are 90 commercial growers producing raspberries on approximately 2000 acres in B.C. Production is concentrated in the central Fraser Valley.
- B.C. typically produces 10 to 15 million pounds of raspberries annually. In 2021, the crop was reduced to approximately 8.8 million pounds due to the impacts of extreme heat.
- The B.C. raspberry industry has been decreasing in size from peak production in the 1980's when there were approximately 6000 acres producing over 40 million pounds. There is concern about losing economies of scale along the value chain as the B.C. raspberry industry contracts.
- B.C. producers face higher input costs relative to producers in the United States and other areas of the world.
- Over 80 percent of the raspberries produced in B.C. are machine-harvested and destined for the processing market. Fruit is graded and frozen into Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) berries, jam-grade (flats), puree-grade (drums) or juice-grade. There is little value-added processing.
- Approximately 20 percent of the crop is harvested by hand for fresh markets. The cost and availability of labour are barriers to fresh market production.
- The B.C. raspberry industry is a price taker on the global market. Grower prices for raspberries were high in 2020 and 2021.

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- Opportunities for increased domestic sales of fresh and IQF raspberries were identified through a Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) -funded Market Opportunities Assessment for B.C. Berries in March 2020.
- The Raspberry Replant Program incentivizes the planting of raspberry varieties with suitability for fresh and IQF raspberries. Refer to *Estimates Note: Tree Fruit and Nut – Hazelnut & Raspberry Revitalization and Replant*.
- Approximately 45 B.C. raspberry growers subscribe to the Agriculture Income Protection (AgriStability) program which protects against declines in net farming income due to production or market conditions.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- There is one Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Berry Crop Specialist in each of the other two large raspberry-producing provinces, Quebec (1050 acres raspberries) and Ontario (680 acres raspberries).

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- 1.0 FTE position has been allocated to the berry sector as the Industry Specialist.
- Additional AFF staff including 1.0 FTE Entomologist, Plant Pathologist, Nutrient Management Specialist and Minor Use Pesticide Coordinator spend a portion of their time on the raspberry sector.
- The province has supported the raspberry industry with a raspberry replant program (\$104,000 in 2021 and \$181,000 committed for 2022-23), a CAP-funded market opportunities assessment for B.C. berries (\$60,000 across raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and cranberries) and CAP-funded research into competitive berry production practices and berry breeding (\$200,000 per year from 2018-2023 across raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries).

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## MEAT INSPECTION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Meat Inspection Program ensures that consumers can enjoy B.C. meats with full confidence that the program maintains the highest standards of food safety and humane slaughter.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) has 60 employees who conduct inspections at provincially licensed meat facilities, and other staff to provide information for licensing applicants.
- There are 57 provincially licensed abattoirs across British Columbia: 36 are licensed for red meat, 29 are licensed for poultry, and 8 are licensed for both.
- There are 103 provincially licensed Farmgate Plus establishments and 5 Farmgate establishments: 44 are licensed for red meat, 32 are licensed for poultry, and 32 are licensed for both.
- The Ministry is committed to working with operators and applicants—with operations of all types and sizes—to support development of food safe, cost effective and innovative slaughter capacity solutions in all regions of the province.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Meat Inspection Program includes 60 inspection staff in four regions (Vancouver Island; Lower Mainland; Interior and Northern BC) who are supported by management, administration, and a Meat Hygiene Veterinarian who supports inspection staff to make dispositions regarding animals and carcasses.
- On October 1, 2021, the Ministry amended the Meat Inspection Regulation to create new licence categories, and to allow more modernized inspection approaches, increase production limits, expand where meat products can be sold, and increase areas where rural licences are available.
- Licensed abattoirs
  - On October 1, 2021, all previously licensed Class A and B abattoirs automatically transitioned to a new abattoir licence.
  - An inspector must be present for a licensed abattoir to operate to ensure best practices in animal welfare and the highest standards of food safety.
  - Most licensed abattoirs are small scale operations: more than 75% of licensed abattoir production is from four abattoirs. Some plants process under 200 animals per year.
- Farmgate and Farmgate Plus licences
  - On October 1, all previously licensed Class D and E licences were transitioned to Farmgate Plus licences and Farmgate licences.
  - Farmgate and Farmgate Plus licences support local livestock and meat production in remote and rural communities where slaughter capacity is

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limited. They are available province-wide and are intended to provide on-farm options for small producers who want to slaughter their own animals. Custom slaughter at Farmgate Plus facilities is also available to provide flexibility for nearby producers so long as the licence holder complies with production limits on their licence.

- Farmgate licences are entry-level licences intended for low volume producers interested in slaughtering their own animals on farm. They allow annual production of up to 5 animal units (5,000 lbs. live weight), and licence holders can sell meat products at the farm, at farmers markets within their regional district, and at farmers markets within 50 km of their farm (including in another regional district).
- Farmgate Plus licences are intended for small producers interested in slaughtering their own animals or providing limited custom slaughter for neighboring producers. They allow annual production of up to 25 animal units (25,000 lbs. live weight), and licence holders can sell meat products direct to consumers, retail, restaurants, and at farmers markets province-wide.
- The Ministry recommends that operators interested in higher production or that want to focus on custom slaughter should explore becoming fully inspected as a licensed abattoir.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- All provinces have provincial meat inspection programs but not all are traditional meat inspection systems requiring the presence of an inspector to operate.
- BC collaborates with other provinces to share information, inform best practices, and continue improving the Meat Inspection Program.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Program Expenditures (\$ millions):

| 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 3.3     | 3.4     | 3.7     | 3.8     | 4.0     | TBD     |

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## RURAL SLAUGHTER MODERNIZATION

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- On October 1, 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries amended the Meat Inspection Regulation. Amendments include a new licensing framework, a five-year term for all licences, and allow for utilization of alternative inspection methods. These changes will make it easier for B.C. producers to provide locally raised meat.
- Amendments support four of the six recommendations from the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fish and Food's 2018 report on Local Meat Production in British Columbia. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries continues work on the remaining recommendations.
- New Farmgate and Farmgate Plus licences are available province-wide and provide on-farm options for small producers who want to provide safe, locally produced meat.
- There are currently 103 provincially licensed Farmgate Plus establishments and 5 Farmgate establishments.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries staff are available to support licence applicants, and inspect facilities to ensure British Columbians can enjoy safe, locally raised meat.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is committed to supporting B.C.'s meat industry with the many challenges they face, including capacity issues such as accessing slaughter services and cut-and-wrap businesses to process meat, and a lack of skilled labour.

### BACKGROUND:

- In 2018, the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fish and Food released a report on Local Meat Production in B.C. making 21 recommendations.
- In September 2020, the Ministry released a Rural Slaughter Modernization Intentions Paper for public and industry comment regarding potential policy changes to increase economic opportunities and strengthen B.C.'s provincial food system while maintaining high standards of food safety and animal welfare. 88 submissions were received.
- In December 2020, oversight of Class D and E (rural slaughter) licences transferred to the Ministry from health authorities.
- On October 1, 2021, the Ministry amended the Meat Inspection Regulation to create new licence categories, and to allow more modernized inspection approaches (see Estimates Note 4785 - Meat Inspection Program – Overview for details)
- Amendments support four of the six recommendations from the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fish and Food's report.
- The Food Safety Inspection Branch is currently hiring and training Agri-food Compliance Officers to support improved oversight of rural slaughter.

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- Meat Hygiene and Agri-food Inspectors continue to inspect slaughter activities at all licensed Abattoirs.
- Limited staff capacity and the need to prioritize Abattoir inspections did not allow for all Farmgate and Farmgate Plus establishments to be visited in 2021. New inspection staff are being hired and trained.
- The compliance rate for farmgate establishments inspected to date has been high. Compliance with inspection standards means better food safety and lower risk to public health: 40% are assessed as low risk, 60% as medium risk, and 0% as high risk.
- The standard is to inspect low risk establishments at least once per year; medium risk at least twice per year; and high risk at least three times per year.
- Meat Inspection Program plans for piloting and evaluating alternative inspection methods for Abattoirs are progressing.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- All provinces have provincial meat inspection programs but not all are traditional meat inspection systems requiring the presence of an inspector to operate.
- B.C. is one of the only provinces to offer a licensing alternative to a fully-inspected abattoir licence, along with Alberta.

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## **MEAT INSPECTION HARMONIZATION WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health are coordinating to harmonize inspection of food premises and slaughter at establishments where these activities are co-located.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and regional health authority inspectors are now able to conduct one inspection where slaughter and food processing functions are co-located.
- Harmonized inspections ensures efficient use of government resources to improve public safety and streamline service for licence holders.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- On July 14, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer directed the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) and the Ministry of Health (HLTH) to harmonize inspections of co-located slaughter establishments and food premises.
- The Ministry's Meat Inspection Program inspectors and Agrifood Compliance and Enforcement Officers are responsible for inspecting slaughter establishments.
- HLTH, through regional health authorities' Environmental Health Officers (EHOs), inspects food premises where meat products are processed into food items and in some cases sold to the public.
- On October 5, 2021, by Ministerial Order, HLTH authorized the Ministry's inspectors to inspect for food premises requirements on the property of slaughter establishments.
- Authorization of EHOs to inspect slaughter establishments also provides opportunity for more efficient oversight in remote locations.
- Transfer of responsibility from Health Authorities (HAs) to the Ministry in 2020 for inspection and oversight of rural slaughter was partly in response to the need to relieve HAs from increased workloads due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Ministry, HLTH, and HAs are working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and operational guidelines to confirm how operational matters such as training, inspection parameters, and non-compliance follow-up can be distributed efficiently. Work is expected to continue into 2022.

### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In most provinces, health ministries and subordinate organizations such as health authorities are responsible for inspection of food premises. Agriculture ministries are typically responsible for inspecting slaughter establishments.

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**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- NA

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## **New Entrants – Support For New Beginning Farmers**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- New entrants to agriculture face significant barriers to entry with the rising cost of agricultural land and inputs as well as the increased complexity of regulations, markets access, technology advancements and production practices.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) recognizes the importance of attracting the next generation of young farmers, and ensuring support is available to help them succeed.
- As a part of Grow BC, the Ministry launched the *New Entrant Strategy: Growing BC's Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders* to help address new farmers access land, knowledge, and capital.
- In September 2018, AFF launched the BC Land Matching Program which is delivered by the Young Agrarians. The Program provides land matching services to new farmers and landowners, as well as educational events across the Province.
  - As of January 2022, the BC Land Matching Program has supported 182 farmland matches between new farmers and landowners. 3577 hectares (8,841 acres) of B.C. farmland have been brought into production in many areas of the province with very expensive land prices.
- In response to COVID-19 and as a part of the StrongerBC Economic Recovery Plan, in 2020/21 AFF launched the Small Farm Business Acceleration Pilot Program (SFBA) which support 64 new and small farms to grow their agricultural businesses.
- AFF expanded existing CAP programs to provide appropriate access to business planning support through the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program. This included the development of business plan coaching to support new farmers to develop their business plan with the support of a qualified business consultant.
- AFF created an informal mentorship framework to help organizations and communities support farmer-to-farmer knowledge transfer and to strengthen informal learning among farmers.
- Through CAP funding, AFF continues to support new and young farmers to build capacity and promote leadership and agri-business skills through a program delivered by BC Young Farmers.
- AFF has technical experts, programs, workshops, and resources related to cost of production, financial and business planning, and other topics to support new entrants to the sector and our economy.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) New Entrant Agrologist leads the delivery of the *New Entrant Strategy*, as a part of Grow BC, and develops resources and programs for new entrants in B.C..
- The New Entrant Needs Assessment, conducted by AFF in 2019, highlighted the three barriers that hinder the success of new farmers and informed the development of the *New Entrant Strategy*:
  - Access to affordable farmland,
  - Access to capital, credit, or other sources of financing, and
  - Access to knowledge through informal mentorship, business coaching and online resources.
- AFF's new entrant programs advance the three pillars of the *New Entrant Strategy*:
  - Help new entrants to access land,
  - Increase the business and production knowledge of new entrants, and
  - Support new entrants to access capital.
- The New Entrant Advisory Group consists of members representing different regions, sectors and new farmer groups and provides feedback to the New Entrant Agrologist to support the implementation of the *New Entrant Strategy*.
- BC Land Matching Program, delivered by Young Agrarians, provides land matching and business support services to new farmers looking for land as well as landowners interested in finding someone to farm their land. Since the pilot launch in 2016, the program has helped 182 farmers, with 8,841 acres brought into or maintained in agricultural production (see FBB Estimates Note – BC Land Matching Program for more detail.)
- In response to COVID-19, the Ministry launched the Small Farm Business Acceleration Pilot Program in 2020/21. The pilot provided cost-shared funds to support agriculture business growth through access to capital. The Ministry had more than 170 applications for the program and was able to fund 64 farm businesses from across the province – the majority of which are owned by new and young farmers.
- AFF partners with BCYF to deliver the Young and New Farmer Skill Development Program which is a cost-share funded program in which youth and new entrants can apply for funding support for opportunities through participation in knowledge-based events, conferences, seminars and training.
- Additional AFF resources available to new entrants to agriculture include:
  - The New Farm Start Up Guide, Growing Your Farm Enterprise, Taking Stock for the Beginning Farmer, and the Guide for Agriculture Lease Agreements in British Columbia are available online and in print.
  - Access to professional business coaches through one-on-one support and farm business management short courses at agriculture shows or through online

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webinars.

- Funding for industry groups and new entrant groups such as BC Young Farmers to support new farmers to access knowledge transfer events and conferences.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. provides an enhanced suite of new entrant/beginning farmer programs and opportunities compared to other provinces. Quebec is the most sophisticated in the program suite among the provinces which includes land matching and grant/loan programs.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The Province supported the BC Land Matching Program with \$300,000 in 2018/2019, \$375,000 in 2019/2020, \$390,000 in 2020/2021 and \$390,000 in 2021/2022.
- The Province supported the Young and New Entrant Skill Development Program with \$25,000 in 2021/2022
- The Province also provided \$25,000 through the B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program to support business plan coaching for new and small farmers.

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## **New Entrants – BC Land Matching Program**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- As of January 2022, the BC Land Matching Program has supported 182 farmland matches between new farmers and landowners. 3577 hectares (8,841 acres) of B.C. farmland have been brought into production as a result of the program, many in areas of the province with very expensive land prices.
- One of the largest barriers for many new entrants to agriculture is finding land to farm that is affordable, suitable for agriculture, and to secure land agreements.
- Land matcher support and services have been implemented in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, Cowichan Valley and Vancouver Island, Okanagan Central North, Columbia Basin and Central/North.
- Recognizing the importance of supporting young and new farmers entering agriculture to find affordable and secure land to farm, the Ministry launched the B.C. Land Matching Program (BCLMP), delivered by the Young Agrarians, in 2018 with an investment of \$300,000. We increased this investment to \$375,000 in 2019/20, \$390,000 in 2020/21 to support the expansion of the program in Northern B.C. and maintained funding at \$390,000 in 2021/22.
- The program provides land matching and business support services for new and established farmers and matches them with landowners seeking to lease their properties and ensures their land stays in production or begins to produce food.
- Farmers and landowners matched through the program have more secure land agreements allowing farmers to focus on developing their business and increasing production.
- As a key strategy under Grow BC, the BCLMP also supports the implementation of the Ministry's New Entrant Strategy, a framework for increasing the number of new and young farmers working in B.C.'s agriculture sector.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- BCLMP (the Program), delivered by Young Agrarians, provides land matching and business support services to new farmers looking for land as well as landowners interested in finding someone to farm their land.
  - The Program has dedicated land matchers for the Okanagan, Metro Vancouver / Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, Columbia Basin, and Central / Northern BC.
- Program activities include:
  - An online and searchable inventory of B.C. land opportunities.
  - Personalized and regionally based matchmaking services for new farmers and landowners, including referrals to business and technical support services.
  - Educational events and resources to increase knowledge and facilitate matches between new farmers and landowners

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- Since the pilot launch in 2016, the program has helped make 182 land matches with 8,841 acres brought into or maintained in agricultural production.
- 80% of the matches arranged through the program are in regions with high real estate prices including Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, and the Okanagan.
- Number of land matches finalized by region: Metro Vancouver/Fraser Valley (45), Vancouver Island (52), Okanagan (49), Columbia Basin (19), Central and Northern BC (17).
- Between April 2019 and January 2021, the BC Land Matching Program (the Program) achieved the following:
  - Completed matches: 53 matches representing 2,868.10 acres with matches ranging from 0.1 to 2,381.15 acres.
  - Range and average of length of lease for completed matches: Range - 0.5 to 29 years; Average – 5.65 years.
  - 12 in-person Land Access events, total 394 attendees; online Land Forum with 3 land leasing themed sessions, total 290 attendee: Land Leasing 101 & Regional Networking, Panel: Perspectives on Sharing Farmland and Land Showcase (as well as sessions for land sharing skills building and business development for farmers).
- The Program continues to work towards supporting new entrant business readiness, increasing acres in production and the length and quality of land matched leases.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Apart from Quebec, B.C. is the only Province or territory in Canada to support regional land matching services.
- Regional land matching services supported by the Government of Alberta is expected for fall 2022.
- The Province supported the BCLP with \$300,000 in 2018/19, \$375,000 in 2018/20, \$390,000 in 2020/21 and 2021/22 which fund the majority of the program. Provincial contributions are supplemented by additional funding from the Bullitt Foundation, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Columbia Basin Trust, Cowichan Valley Regional District, and Regional District Central Okanagan.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

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## Next Policy Framework

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- **B.C. continues to actively participate in Next Policy Framework (NPF) discussions.**
- **The Guelph Statement was agreed to by federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) governments in November 2021.**
- **B.C. fully supports the Guelph Statement's priorities and guiding principles, which will form the foundation of the next multilateral funding agreement.**
- **These priority areas include:**
  - **Climate change and environmental protection**
  - **Science, research and innovation**
  - **Domestic and global markets**
  - **Sector capacity and growth**
  - **Resiliency**
- **FPT governments are currently discussing the multi-lateral framework (MFA).**
- **The funding envelope for the NPF has not yet been confirmed.**
- **Agriculture and agri-food Canada (AAFC) will be engaging stakeholders on the MFA in the coming months.**

### BACKGROUND:

- Since the implementation of the Agricultural Policy Framework in 2003, multilateral framework agreements between federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) governments have provided direction and support to the Canadian agriculture and food sectors through both federal-only and cost-shared programs.
- The current multilateral framework agreement, the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP), overall cost-shared programming represents approximately \$400.5 million for B.C. programs over five years. CAP will expire in 2023 and will be replaced by the Next Policy Framework (NPF) which is currently being developed.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In November 2021, FPT governments signed the Guelph Statement, a shared vision for the NPF. The Guelph Statement includes five priority areas for the next framework: 1) climate change and the environment; 2) science, research and innovation; 3) market development and trade; 4) building sector capacity and growth; 5) resiliency and public trust.
- FPTs are currently drafting language for the multi-lateral framework agreement. B.C. has been engaged at the table to ensure the language reflects B.C.’s priorities and needs.
- B.C. would like an increase in the funding envelope for the 2023-2028 agreement to address inflation, increased responsibilities, a growing sector, and new emerging challenges (i.e., climate change).

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Under the CAP, close to \$5 billion has been jointly committed across the country. This funding is shared under three broad categories:
  - Business Risk Programming, which nationally accounts for approximately \$1.6 billion annually;
  - \$1 billion in federal-only strategic initiatives; and
  - \$2 billion in cost-shared programs that are funded by 60:40 (F:PT) and delivered by provincial and territorial governments (PTs).

**TABLE 1: FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL CAP COST-SHARED PROGRAMMING CONTRIBUTIONS**

| Program Area                                  | Federal Contribution (5yr) | Provincial Contribution (5yr) | Total (5yr)        |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Market Development                            | 9,652,904                  | 7,460,500                     | 17,133,404         |
| Business Development                          | 4,668,324                  | 3,609,599                     | 8,277,922          |
| Innovation                                    | 14,558,426                 | 11,256,981                    | 25,812,407         |
| Assurance                                     | 12,579,568                 | 9,721,961                     | 22,301,529         |
| Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change | 18,117,965                 | 14,003,960                    | 32,121,925         |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                               | <i>69,075,000</i>          | <i>46,050,000</i>             | <i>115,125,000</i> |
| Business Risk Management (est.)               | 170,000,000                | 115,375,000                   | 285,375,000        |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>239,075,000</b>         | <b>161,425,000</b>            | <b>400,500,000</b> |

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## Nutrient Management and AEM Code

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- AFF staff implement a Nutrient Management Program that helps farmers make better use of soil amendments (manures, fertilizers, composts, etc.).
- Supporting producers in improving nutrient management practices is a key activity to support climate change mitigation from the agriculture sector and help producers reduce the production of their greenhouse gas emissions.
- The program helps farmers grow crops profitably, improve soil health, while reducing risk of greenhouse gas (nitrous oxide) emissions and risks to the environment.
- AFF takes a modern, digital-first approach to soil and nutrient management services: farmers who work online are using AFF's interactive tools to improve decision-making with soil amendments, so AFF experts can spend more time on 'face-to-face' extension, training, and outreach.
- AFF's Nutrient Management Program also helps farmers and ranchers with meeting regulatory requirements of the Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM Code) of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV).
- The AEM Code phases in nutrient management requirements for nearly all agricultural sectors over multiple years, affecting how manures and fertilizers are managed and used to grow crops, and it regulates on-farm practices for the storage and use of manures, composts, and other material, which may impact water and air quality.
- The Nutrient Management Program builds on longstanding work by AFF and the Environmental Farm Plan program. These activities are a key component in positioning B.C. as a leader in regenerative agriculture practices with a foundation in healthy soil management.

### BACKGROUND:

#### **Online, Interactive Tools and the AEM Code**

- The Nutrient Management Calculator is an online, interactive tool that was co-developed with farmers and consultants (e.g., qualified professionals), so they could use it to quickly determine optimal rates of soil amendments or to develop Nutrient Management Plans that a farmer may be required to have under the AEM Code.
  - From October 2021 to present, there were 400 different users over 800 sessions, primarily from the Fraser Valley, with an average use time of 10 minutes.
  - The tool is targeted to livestock (dairy), poultry, and field vegetable sectors, and it is used in the Ministry's Environmental Farm Plan program.

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- Work started in 2021 to provide decision aid tools to tree fruit and other horticultural sectors, to be continued in 2022/23, in preparation for when these farms may need a Nutrient Management Plan under the AEM Code.
- The Application Risk Management tool is an online, interactive tool that was co-developed with dairy farmers, so they could use it to quickly determine when it was best to spread manure on each of their fields.
  - During expected periods of usage in 2021/22, there have been approximately 160 different users (compared with a targeted number of 350 dairy farmers) over 460 sessions from the Lower Mainland.
  - The ARM tool is needed to help meet an AEM Code requirement affecting mostly dairy farmers in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. Farmers are required to conduct and document the results of “risk assessments” before spreading manure during the months of October, February, and March.

**Extension Activities in 2021/22: Training and Outreach**

- Extension continues with research and demonstration trials to promote practices to build soil health and optimize fertilizer use on 23 berry farms and forage fields in the Lower Mainland and in the B.C. Interior.
- New education materials are being developed with 4-H youth, for young farmers to influence soil health practices that support their family farms. This work is being done in coordination with AFF youth development staff.
- During the pandemic, AFF is working with industry partners to deliver a Forage Management webinar series, covering topics including soil quality, management practices to improve soils, cover crops & intercropping, and pasture rejuvenation.
- In 2021, the program launched AFF’s Nutrient Management Planning training, recognized by ENV, to train planners (i.e., primarily consultants) who are needed to prepare nutrient management plans for some farmers under the AEM Code regulation. Currently, over 60 people are enrolled in the training course.
- AFF will continue to focus its research and extension efforts on soil and nutrient management practices, as well as supporting innovative agri-tech solutions for producers to manage their waste.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Most other provincial governments across Canada have environmental regulations that have similar or more stringent nutrient management requirements as in the AEM Code, primarily to protect water quality.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information

- AFF has 4 FTE positions supporting the nutrient management program activities.

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## ARMYWORMS

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Invasive pests are always a challenge for farming and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) is working with farmers in British Columbia to reduce the risk of armyworm outbreaks.
- Ministry entomologists and other staff monitor armyworms in the Okanagan, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island, provide treatment advice for impacted farmers and residents and will continue to do so in 2022.
- Ministry staff have recommended Health Canada-approved products to treat armyworms, provided the conditions of use on the labels are followed.
- The Ministry also has a number of programs that support farmers who experience crop losses and income declines due to armyworms.
- Western Yellowstriped Armyworm was first discovered in the Okanagan in 2018 with surveys conducted from 2019-2021.
- True Armyworm was first discovered on Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley in 2017. We have been researching and surveying since then.
- Farmers and homeowners can help by reporting to the Ministry any suspected Western Yellowstriped Armyworm caterpillars, True Armyworm, and damage to crops.
- The Ministry will continue to partner with farmers and communities to minimize the risk and limit the damage.

### BACKGROUND:

- In 2017, Vancouver Island and Fraser Valley forage producers (grass and corn) experienced unprecedented losses from invading armyworm caterpillars. True Armyworm (*Mythimna unipuncta*) is a North American insect that may be introduced annually in April-May to southern Canada on wind currents. Larvae or caterpillars feed voraciously on grass crops including hay, corn, and cereals.
- Having surveillance (traps and field scouting) and communication tools (timely pest notices/updates circulated) in place each spring and summer will enable growers to properly manage True Armyworm if the pest is detected by traps, field scouting, or larvae.
- Area-wide monitoring with traps and visual searches for True Armyworm moths and larvae occurred in affected regions of Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley in 2018-2021. Fortunately, a low number of True Armyworm moths were found, and no outbreaks of True Armyworm larvae have occurred since 2017.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- In 2018 and 2019, the North Okanagan experienced outbreaks of Western Yellowstriped Armyworm (*Spodoptera praefica*). Outbreaks were very severe in 2019 with crop losses. Very low numbers of Western Yellowstriped Armyworm moths were trapped in 2020 and 2021 and there were no outbreaks of larvae or crop damage. Western Yellowstriped Armyworm attacks various broadleaf crops, including alfalfa, canola, corn, vegetables and some ornamentals.
- Ministry staff answered calls, conducted field visits, and monitored Western Yellowstriped Armyworm into the fall of 2020.
- Ministry staff prepared a factsheet, brochure and bulletin for outreach. Media and other web platforms were also used to promote awareness about the pest.
- Trapping and visual searches will be conducted in 2022 on Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley to evaluate the risk from armyworms for farmers.
- Surveys will not be conducted for Western Yellowstriped armyworm in the North Okanagan in 2022 because moth numbers have been very low and there have been no outbreaks since 2019.
- Hay and cereal crops produce 1.91 million tonnes and are valued at over \$88.5 million in 2020

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Southern Manitoba and Ontario have outbreaks of True Armyworm from time to time in cereal and grass hay crops. Losses can be significant and some growers do apply foliar insecticides. Northern California, Western Oregon, and Washington also experienced outbreaks in 2017. Like B.C., there was no outbreak in Washington in 2018-2021. However, numbers were high in parts of eastern North America in 2020.
- From time to time, there are outbreaks of Western Yellowstriped Armyworm in North America.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Funding via the CAP Biosecurity and Surveillance Program supported activities related to True Armyworm and Western Yellowstriped Armyworm monitoring, biology, and outreach to industry amounting to \$35,000 in 2020/2021. A control program planned for the North Okanagan in 2020/2021 was not needed because of low numbers of moths caught in traps and absence of caterpillars.
- Up to \$40,000 in CAP funds is estimated for 2022/23 to support studies on the migration and biology of armyworms in order to help with predicting outbreaks in the future. Planning is underway to ensure surveillance can continue in 2022/23 in areas of concern on Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- In 2022/2023, the Ministry will contribute staff time and funds to investigate impacts, inform growers, buy monitoring supplies and check traps and fields for the pest. Total estimated staff time will be between 0.1 and 0.2 of an FTE as well as travel costs. Summer students and contractors are funded via CAP and industry contributions.

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## JAPANESE BEETLE

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Japanese beetle (JB) surveillance, movement control, communications, and eradication continue to be recommended by all industry stakeholders, the BC Plant Protection Advisory Council, and trading partners in California, Oregon, and Washington.
- Results in the BC eradication program are promising, with an 86% and 82% decrease in beetle catch in 2019 and 2020 and no new infested locations outside of downtown Vancouver and False Creek area. In 2021, beetle numbers decreased by 68%.
- While overall numbers of beetles caught in 2021 were low, several were found outside of the previously known areas, including south Vancouver, Burnaby, and Port Coquitlam. Treatments are planned in 2022 for all these areas.
- In 2018, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) created a regulated area around the False Creek site to enforce movement restrictions of potentially infested materials such as yard waste and soil, and continued trapping and surveillance work. As a result of the beetle catches in more areas in 2021, the regulated area will approximately double in size in Vancouver, and a small, regulated area will be created in Burnaby.
- In February 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) will issue a notice to treat to the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Parks, the City of Burnaby, and the City of Port Coquitlam under the Japanese beetle regulation in the BC *Plant Protection Act* to enable treatment of larvae and adult beetles and aid in movement control by CFIA.
- The Ministry is partnered with the Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC) to help deliver on public outreach, collaboration, and facilitation of the JB initiative.

### BACKGROUND:

- JB (*Popillia japonica*) was identified in the False Creek area of Vancouver in July 2017, a first detection for BC. JB is a regulated pest in Canada and the United States. It was introduced to North America in 1916 and is now widespread in Eastern North America, including parts of Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime provinces.
- JB is not considered established in the Western US, and not detected in BC prior to 2017. BC is currently considered to be free from JB (pest-free status).
- Major impacts if JB was left to establish in BC would include damage to agricultural crops including berries, ornamentals, corn, tree fruit, grapes, turf, and landscape plants, from larval feeding on roots and beetles feeding on flowers, fruit, and leaves. To limit this damage there would be an increase in pesticide use. The nursery sector is anticipated to be hit the hardest as trade would also be impacted. Growers of nursery stock who wish to ship outside of southwest BC would be required to participate in a costly certification program to export product to JB-free areas in western North America.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- Eradication is supported by all industry stakeholders, and the Ministry of Forests, Land, Natural Resources and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, City of Vancouver, Vancouver Parks Board, Metro Vancouver, the BC Plant and Protection Advisory Council, the ISCBC, and trading partners in California, Oregon, and Washington.
- In 2018, the Province of BC, Vancouver Parks Board, and the City of Vancouver launched a treatment program for larvae of JB. Based on trap catches, larval treatment occurred in 2018-2021 and is planned for 2022. Additional years and locations of treatments will be determined based on beetle trap catches.
- A registered, effective, and safe larvicide, Acelepryn is available and was used in 2018-2022 as an annual early spring ground treatment between April 1 and July 15.
- CFIA is committed to carrying out the annual JB trapping and surveillance in the area.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Eradication success requires a multi-year program, as evidenced by programs in other jurisdictions.
- JB is present in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, PEI and Quebec.
- JB is not expected to survive on the Canadian prairies.
- JB is a regulated pest in all western states of the United States. BC can currently export nursery stock to JB-free states based on our pest free status. That status will be lost if the pest spreads out of Vancouver and into crop production areas of BC.
- The US has active surveillance programs underway nationally. California, Oregon and Washington currently have eradication programs underway.
- BC representatives are in contact with colleagues in the western United States about JB initiatives.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- A 2017 risk assessment by the Ministry estimates \$28 million in annual losses to crop production if JB becomes established. Additional losses would occur due to the cost of management, certification and potential for loss of export markets.
- Funding has been provided through the CAP Biosecurity and Surveillance Program for activities related to JB eradication (treatment) and movement control (temporary transfer station) with the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Parks Board, project facilitation (with the ISCBC), public outreach, and industry engagement (BC Landscape and Nursery Association). This included \$10,500 for 17/18, \$460,000 for 18/19, \$350,000 for 19/20, and an estimated \$350,000 for 20/21.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- In 2022 resource requirements for an eradication or suppression program included a minimum 0.5 FTE at the Ministry.
- Funding requirements and support are expected to be higher in 2022 compared to 2021 due to the more dispersed treatment areas over 3 cities.

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C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

## Little Cherry Virus and Insect Vectors

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In 2021, Little Cherry Virus 2 (LChV2) and Western-X phytoplasma (W-X) caused substantial yield losses in Washington State.
- BC grower groups expressed concerned about risk to cherry trees in the Creston, Okanagan and Similkameen Valley growing regions.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Ministry) staff collected 230 samples from 10 orchards that displayed symptoms. Samples—tested in the Plant Health Laboratory in Abbotsford—were negative for LChV2.
- In 2021, tailgate meetings were conducted in Creston, Oliver, Penticton, Kelowna, and Vernon to educate growers on how to identify symptoms and properly tag trees for collection.
- The Ministry has been in discussion with grower groups, who will collect samples in Creston in 2022 and will focus on orchards that have a history of small fruit or LChV symptoms.
- In 2021, sweep netting, trapping and visual searches were conducted in orchards in the Creston, Okanagan, and Similkameen Valley regions by the Ministry entomologist to determine if insect vectors were present. This surveillance will continue in 2022.

### BACKGROUND:

- Little cherry disease was first detected in North America in the Kootenay Valley in 1938. By the 1970's, a once thriving cherry industry in the Kootenay Valley was destroyed. The disease is caused by two viruses in British Columbia, Little Cherry Virus 1 (LChV1) and Little Cherry Virus 2 (LChV2).
- The Ministry conducted surveys for little cherry disease in Interior BC between 1990 and 2003 and removal of infected trees was enforced under the *Provincial Plant Protection Act*. However, complete eradication was not achieved, as only trees surveyed from commercial orchards or trees suspected of having LChV and positively identified were removed.

## C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

- Mealybugs are known to be the vector of LChV2 but there are no known insect vectors of LChV1. Few insect vectors were found during the survey, and the conclusion was that the spread of the disease was through budwood and root grafting. Management strategy at the time was removal and destruction of infested trees and this strategy remains the most effective way of managing little cherry disease.
- Ministry staff have been in discussion with Washington State University to test samples in 2022 for LChV1, LChV2 and W-X using Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). In 2021, only LChV2 was tested, using the less precise ELISA method.
- An industry led Little Cherry Disease Task Force, with members from industry, federal and provincial governments, and consultants, was formed in 2020 to work on surveillance and management of little cherry virus in Interior BC.
- BC is national leader in cherry production with 15.6 tonnes produced and valued at \$64.8 million in 2021.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Little cherry disease has been a re-emerging problem in Washington State since 2010 with an estimated 28,000 trees removed. The Northwest Cherry Growers estimated a loss of 2.5 to 3 million boxes of fruit in 2020 because of the disease.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Funding of \$53,500 via the CAP Biosecurity and Surveillance Program supported the survey in 2021. This included two summer students for sample collection and testing.
- In 2022, with the aid of a summer student and industry groups in Creston, samples will be collected and sent to Washington State University for PCR analysis of LChV1, LChV2, and W-X. CAP Biosecurity and Surveillance funding will support this work.

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## Regen and AgriTech Strategy

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Food security is vital to our economy. Our government is working hard to ensure we have a safe and resilient local food system now and for generations to come.
- B.C. is fortunate to have several competitive advantages for agri-tech development and adoption, including our diverse agricultural landscape, proximity to overseas markets, world class research institutions, and food safety reputation. Our province is home to over 150 agri-tech companies that are developing and producing world-class solutions for the agriculture and seafood sectors.
- We know that technology brings opportunities for efficiency and resiliency and so our government is doubling down, providing funding and delivering programs, such as the Agriculture Venture Acceleration Program and the Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program, to help support the growth of agri-technology in B.C.
- The Ministry has laid the groundwork for a new regenerative agriculture and agri-tech network (RAAN) by hosting the RegenBC conference in Fall, 2021 - with a goal of supporting innovation in B.C.'s growing agri-tech sector and the adoption of new technology to improve production and efficiency. This will help make farming more sustainable and use agriculture as a tool to help mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- The Ministry is launching a Ministers' Advisory Group on Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Advisory Group (Advisory Group) to help guide the delivery of Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Minister) mandate letter commitments, including the formal establishment and utilization of the Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network (RAAN).
- The commitment to develop the RAAN is one of two initiatives in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries mandate letter focused on leveraging agri-tech to enhance food security and will be delivered in partnership the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation (JERI).
- Through supporting agriculture, food processing, and agri-tech businesses to grow, while ensuring the preservation of critical growing areas, we can ensure a resilient and competitive agriculture and food sector in our province that feeds B.C. families. This will be crucial not only to ensuring food security, but also for lasting prosperity and jobs for British Columbians, especially as we work towards an economic recovery following COVID-19.

### If asked about Food Security Task Force:

- The Food Security Task Force report included four recommendations.

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- The Ministry has a dedicated team, working with JERI, coordinating government's response to the report.
- Recommendations one through three are within existing policy mandates. Where the report calls for making changes to provincial or other government land use policies, the ministries are completing further analysis. The team is engaging with stakeholders and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to understand the challenges with expanding agri-tech businesses in B.C. and exploring solutions.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Minister's November 2020 mandate letter states:

- With support from the Minister of JERI, lead work to develop a new Regenerative Agriculture Network, which will create jobs for workers, opportunities for farmers and greater food security by bringing together natural systems of production with agri-technologies that enhance production.
- Drawing on the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, take steps to make B.C. a leader in food security and the emerging agri-tech sector, helping B.C. companies that are bringing innovation to agriculture grow, hire more workers and position our province as an agri-tech leader, while protecting farmland in the ALR.

The Food Security Task Force (task force), in collaboration with stakeholders, delivered a report to government in January 2020 providing recommendations for how technology and innovation can be developed, grown and broadly adopted to strengthen B.C.'s agriculture sector and food security across the province. The task force made four recommendations:

1. applying the United Nation' Sustainable Development Goals to agricultural policies;
2. establishing an incubation/acceleration strategy for B.C.'s agri-tech sector;
3. creating an agriculture and agri-tech institute in B.C. in partnership with post-secondary institutions; and
4. reviewing land use planning policies and regulations to ensure B.C.'s agri-tech sector has a place to grow.

"Agri-tech" refers to the use of technology and technological innovation to improve efficiency and output of agricultural production. Agri-tech supports quality economic growth and distributed job growth for British Columbians and creates opportunities to address climate change. Examples of agri-tech include indoor growing, vertical growing, sensor technology, robotics, agricultural genomics and waste reduction technology.

In 2019, B.C.'s agri-tech sector was estimated to contribute \$718 million in total output and 2,805 jobs. By 2025, the sector is projected to contribute \$1.16 billion in total output and 4,392 jobs.

There are several key initiatives underway to support growth of agri-tech and innovation in B.C.'s farm, fish, and food sector including:

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- *Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program*: The program, funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) Innovation program, provides cost-shared funding to farmers, farm organizations, processors, indigenous peoples, academia, agri-tech and supplier companies, and others for innovative late-stage research, pilot/demonstration, and commercialization/adoption of innovative products, processes, practices and technologies; in fiscal year 2020/21, approximately \$2.8M in funding was committed to 48 projects.
- *Agriculture Venture Acceleration Program*: provides mentorship, coaching and market validation training for early-stage agri-tech entrepreneurs; in fiscal year 2020/21, \$200K was provided to support approximately 25 companies.
- *B.C. Food Hub Network*: a network of regional food and beverage innovation and processing hubs ("food hubs") being established across B.C.; to date, 12 regional food hubs, 12 food hub feasibility studies and business plans, and an Endowed Food and Beverage Innovation Professorship at UBC have been funded through the program.
- *Agri-tech Innovation Challenge*: provides funding to support agriculture and agri-tech SMEs/researchers in developing innovative solutions that demonstrate broad application to the sector; during the most recent challenge (2019/20), \$150K was provided to three companies.
- The *StrongerBC* plan, announced in September 2020, committed over \$5 million to expand the B.C. Food Hub Network (under the Ministry) and \$3 million in grants for agri-tech companies in B.C. (under the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation [JERI]).

AFF has a dedicated team, the Strategic Initiatives team, coordinating government's response to the task force report. It was determined that recommendations one through three are within existing policy mandates. Progress on the recommendations includes:

- Recommendations 1-3: The Ministry is increasingly incorporating food system resilience objectives into the Ministry's work, leveraging existing work (such as AVAP, CAP Innovation funding and the B.C. Food Hub Network), and assessing gaps and opportunities related to the role of public sector institutions in advancing B.C.'s agri-tech cluster.
- Recommendation 4: the Ministry announced on Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 2022, clarifications to the Agriculture Land Reserve Use Regulation to allow for more intensive farming. The Strategic Initiatives team continues to work collaboratively with JERI's agritech concierge to understand the challenges with expanding agri-tech businesses in B.C.

Ministers' Advisory Group on Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) is establishing a Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Advisory Group (Advisory Group) to help guide the delivery of Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Minister) mandate letter commitments, including the establishment of a Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network (RAAN). The Advisory Group will provide strategic advice to the Minister on opportunities for promoting innovation, technology adoption, and regenerative practices that will increase the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of B.C.'s food system.

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. has significant competitive advantages above other jurisdictions – such as a diverse agricultural landscape (over 300 commodities), proximity to overseas markets, world class research institutions and food safety reputation – that position the Province to become a global agri-tech leader.
- B.C. is the first jurisdiction in Canada to establish a Food Security Task Force and develop a comprehensive report assessing how to harness new technologies and innovation to support the future of our food system.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The Canada-BC Agri Innovation Program enables B.C.'s agriculture and food sectors to accelerate the pace of innovation. Activities include late-stage research and development; piloting and demonstration; and the commercialization and adoption of innovative products, practices, processes, or technologies. Eligible organizations include producers, processors, industry associations, private businesses, academic institutions, regional districts, and local governments. The program funding is \$14M from 2018-2023.
  - Canada-BC Agri-Innovation projects in 2021/22 have been impacted by external events, such as extreme heat events, wildfires, flooding in the Fraser Valley, loss of highways and infrastructure, and COVID-19 related closures, and delays, resulting in project delays and decommitments.

|                                     | 2018/19   | 2019/20   | 2020/21   | 2021/22   | 2022/23                          | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Program Budget \$                   | 2,520,000 | 2,543,120 | 2,499,192 | 2,520,000 | Government Financial Information |       |
| Committed DPP for Fiscal Year \$    | 1,426,733 | 2,543,120 | 2,850,180 | 2,572,979 |                                  |       |
| Revised Committed DPP for Fiscal \$ |           |           | 2,228,139 | 2,628,511 |                                  |       |
| Overcommitted \$                    |           |           |           | 108,511   |                                  |       |
| Overcommitted %                     |           |           |           | 4%        |                                  |       |
| Paid to Date                        | 1,426,733 | 2,543,120 | 2,489,907 | 1,913,594 |                                  |       |
| % of Total Program Budget Spent     | 57%       | 100%      | 100%      | 76%       |                                  |       |
| DPP Available                       |           |           |           |           |                                  |       |

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## **Restaurants: EAT DRINK LOCAL**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- COVID-19 has continued to have devastating impacts on the restaurant industry, as well as the farmers and food and beverage processors across British Columbia who depend on food service sales channels for their livelihood.
- Through the pandemic and extreme weather events the province has seen over the last year and a half, we have again been reminded about the importance of having a strong local food economy to put food on the table and keep people working.
- British Columbians have come together during these difficult times and continue to show their strength and support for each other, and B.C.'s restaurants have stepped up to the challenges of COVID-19.
- At this difficult time, it's more important than ever to support our local restaurants and enjoy fresh, high-quality local food made right here in B.C.
- Our government is continuing to work closely with the BC Restaurant and Food Association to encourage British Columbians to support local restaurants in their communities through the Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL campaign.
- This year's Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL campaign featured 30 days of inspirational stories about chefs and restaurateurs to encourage people to get out and support local business and enjoy a unique B.C. dining experience.
- Chefs are often the greatest cheerleaders for B.C.'s farmers and ranchers, championing the local food system and showcasing local products from all over the province in imaginative and delicious ways.
- We are committed to continuing to work together with chefs, restaurateurs and our local farmers and food and beverage processors to support economic recovery and a resilient local food system in B.C.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL was launched in 2018 and is delivered in partnership with the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association (BCRFA).
- Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL connects local farmers, ranchers and growers with restaurateurs and chefs who develop feature menus to highlight locally grown and processed food and drinks year-round. Restaurants throughout the province are part of the food web that enhances local food-and-beverage knowledge and gives consumers a delicious opportunity to try local, seasonal and sustainable food grown here in the province.
- The campaign is designed to be inclusive. All restaurants and foodservice establishments across the province featuring local B.C. food and beverage products on their menus are eligible to participate free of charge.

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- In May 2019 nearly 400 restaurants across B.C. participated in the Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL campaign (up from 323 in 2018) by showcasing B.C. food and beverage products on their menus.
- Due to COVID, the Ministry cancelled the delivery of the Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL campaign within restaurants scheduled for May 2020, and instead focused on promoting restaurants on Buy BC social media channels.
- In 2021, continuing to deal with COVID impacts on the industry, the Ministry and BCRFA ran a one-month campaign in October promoting 40 chefs and restaurants from across B.C. through Buy BC social media encouraging people to visit restaurants in their communities to continue to support the industry.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- In 2021/21, total expenditures for Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL were \$157,000. A campaign for 2022/23 is under consideration by Ministry staff and a new contract is planned with BCRFA to support delivery of the 2022 Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL campaign.

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## Retail Code of Conduct

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Over the last couple of years, B.C.'s food system has seen unprecedented changes resulting from COVID-19. Despite numerous challenges, we have seen great commitment from our food systems stakeholders to ensuring nutritious, safe, and affordable food to all residents across British Columbia.
- Part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) mandate is to encourage greater food security and local economic growth, and this includes working with Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers to address issues and barriers that our farmers and producers face within the domestic retail market.
- As part of this work, our Ministry is working closely with FPT governments and industry to develop a Retail Code of Conduct, addressing the relationship imbalance in the supplier-retailer relationship and industry concerns around increased retail fees.
- Over the last year, AFF has engaged in informal consultation with stakeholders across the food supply chain regarding the impact of the fees and opportunities to address them including conversations with retailers, producers, and processors.
- The supplier-retailer issues and their potential impact on Canada and B.C.'s food supply chain is top of mind as we continue to work with our partners to identify lasting solutions that will help the sector emerge stronger from these uncertain times.

### BACKGROUND:

- In August of 2020, major retailers, starting with Walmart, introduced a new fee structure for suppliers purportedly to offset growing costs of COVID-19, to build e-commerce infrastructure and to upgrade stores.
- Several Canadian Associations and companies in the food sector have expressed their concerns about the use of arbitrary fees and penalties and the related non-compliance on contracts by large grocery retailers. This has created a climate of uncertainty in supplier-retailer relationships.
- Fees range in percentage amounts. For example, Loblaws charges its largest suppliers an extra 1.2 percent on the cost of goods sold, as well as a customized fee to cover some costs associated with loyalty offers and online promotions. This differs from their arrangement with small manufacturers and farmers who are exempt from fee increases.
- The increasing cost of food has put downward pressure on retailers, distributors, processors, and producers. Food costs are expected to rise up to seven percent in

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2022 with the most significant increases forecasted to be in dairy, baked goods, and vegetables (see Dalhousie University Canada Food Price Report, 2022).

- Retailers have noted that consumer affordability is a priority which has increased the strain on producer/processor profitability. Retailers have used messaging on the importance of affordability to reinforce need for downward pressure on producers and processors.
- In response to increasing challenges between retailers, manufacturers, and producers, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) Ministers of Agriculture have created a joint working group to consult with experts and industry members to clarify the impact of the announced fees and their impacts on the Canadian food supply chain.
- In discussions between FPT Ministers in November 2020, there was agreement that a collaborative and coordinated approach was the best method to move forward.
- The FPT working group is currently awaiting an industry-led draft Code of Conduct that will be put forward sometime in June 2022.
- The FPT group has been made aware that the Federal government has no enforcement mechanisms available, unlike the UK and Australia.
- The FPT group continues to work at a provincial level for options to create legislation should this be necessary.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- The FPT working group has taken a partnership approach to addressing retail fees and their impacts on Canada’s food supply chain. Each FPT member has been encouraged to undertake provincially specific research and engagement as well as look to legal and/or regulatory mechanisms that exist at the provincial level.
- MAFF provides staff time to participate in the FPT working group to address retail fees and engage retailers and industry.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

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## AgriStability

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The AgriStability program helps producers manage significant financial risks that threaten the viability of their farm and are beyond their capacity to manage.
- Under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), AgriStability is designed to provide income protection at the whole farm level to agricultural producers who experience large margin declines caused by production losses, increased costs, or declining market conditions.
- AgriStability program payments to British Columbia (B.C.) producers totaled \$300 million for the period of 2007 to 2021.
- AgriStability is playing a critical role in helping farms recover from the impacts of COVID-19, the summer heat-wave, and fires.
  - Business Risk Management staff called over 1,000 farmers to inform them of the income margin supports available under AgriStability, and how they could participate. As a result, participation for the 2021 program year increased by 18 percent (408 clients).
  - For farms who were put at financial risk because of the events in 2021, the province implemented Late Participation for the program year, which enables producers to sign up for 2021 until December 31, 2022.
  - The interim payment rate was increased from 50 percent to 75 percent of an expected final payment, improving the ability for the program to provide funding in a timely manner.
    - Over \$2.7 million has already been paid to B.C. producers through interim payments for 2021.
    - To help with cash flow issues, administrative changes continue to ensure fast turnaround time for interim payments; average time is now 16 days.
- B.C. is a strong advocate for national program improvements and will continue its work with federal, provincial, and territorial partners to improve AgriStability nationally.
  - B.C. continues to strive for federal cost sharing and the continuation of the B.C. enhancements increasing contribution levels from 70 percent to 80 percent.
  - For the 2020-2022 program years, B.C. was instrumental in removing the Reference Margin Limit which inequitably capped support for farms.
- For the mink industry, which is now in transition because of the impacts of COVID-19, AgriStability will provide income margin support for impacted farms.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- AgriStability is a margin-based (margin is allowable income, minus allowable expenses) income stabilization program, which protects producers against large declines in their farming income due to market conditions, production losses, and increased costs of production.
- Large financial losses in a program year are mitigated by AgriStability, allowing producers to adapt to production and market signals.
- Program benefits are calculated using income and expense data, provided by each farmer through the Canada Revenue Agency. A payment is made if the current year margin falls more than 30 percent below the average of prior years.
- AgriStability is administered under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), effective April 1, 2018. AgriStability will continue under the CAP Agreement, 2018-2023.
- The 2019-2020 B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program:
  - Increased the compensation rate from 70 percent to 80 percent when margins fell below the 30 percent threshold; and
  - Removed the Reference Margin Limit (RML), which for some farms can cause a reduction in compensation and result in an inequitable level of income protection when compared to farms not impacted by the RML.
  - The RML is an average of your allowable expenses for the five-year reference period, to limit the maximum payment.

### **CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- AgriStability is available Canada-wide. It is delivered by provincial administrations in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provide the administration for other provinces and territories.
- Only B.C., through the implementation of the Enhancement Program, has begun to address the known income protection gaps in the CAP AgriStability program.

### **PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Annually, approximately 2,250 B.C. farmers are enrolled in the AgriStability program.
- Program costs are shared 60 percent by Canada, 40 percent by British Columbia.
- Due to the many expense and revenue variables beyond a producer's control, payments significantly vary from year to year.
- Actual and forecasted payments from the most recent years are as follows:
  - 2019 program year payments are forecasted to be \$21 million.
    - Approximately \$5 million of which will be a result of B.C. enhancements.
  - 2020 program year payments are forecasted at \$33 million.
    - Approximately \$5.6 million of which will be a result of B.C. enhancements.
  - 2021 program year payments are forecasted at \$26 million.
    - Approximately \$4 million of which will be a result of B.C. enhancements.
- B.C.'s share of costs (program payments and administration costs) for the AgriStability

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and the B.C. AgriStability Enhancement Program is funded by the Agriculture Income Stabilization Trust. The Trust is designed and funded to manage annual fluctuations in payments under the AgriStability and AgriInvest programs.

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## **Risk Management Programs – Production Insurance Program Delivery**

### **RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:**

- Production Insurance (PI) offers protection against yield and plant losses due to naturally occurring perils, such as hail, spring frost, excessive rain, flood, fire, and drought.
- Individual PI coverage varies depending on the choice of coverage purchased.
- Ministry staff work closely with industry representatives through advisory committees to maintain and enhance the Program to appropriately meet client needs.
- Performance measures are in place for a fast turnaround time on claim payments.
- The PI program is strongly supported by producer organizations. Regular consultations occur with industry led advisory committees.
- During COVID-19 restrictions, extensive outreach was undertaken to ensure client service levels were maintained. Business processes have not been interrupted; renewals and claims proceeded as usual, utilizing electronic means

### **BACKGROUND:**

- Production Insurance (PI) is an insurance scheme to stabilize farm income by minimizing the detrimental effects of yield and plant losses due to uncontrollable natural perils.
- PI is a core Business Risk Management program, enabled by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).
- Funding for PI comes from insurance premiums cost-shared between producers and the provincial and federal governments under the Canada-British Columbia Production Insurance Agreement.
- Premiums are paid into the Production Insurance Special Account (PISA) and insurance claims are paid out of this account. PISA is maintained as means of providing stability to rates when large events occur. The target balance is 10 percent of liabilities. Premium rates are loaded according to the PISA balance; currently, PISA is slightly above the target level required for stability.
- As PI operates as an actuarially sound program, insurance premiums received will equal insurance claims over time.
- Except for forage, the Program has high participation levels for the major agricultural crops produced in British Columbia (B.C).
- Target for processed is within 30 days of the administration receiving all required information from an insured client.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Comparable Production Insurance programs exist in all 10 provinces.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- PI provides approximately \$790M in coverage.
- Annual premium revenue is approximately \$38M and is cost-shared between the federal government, the provincial government, and the producer.
- Final insurance claim payments for the 2021 crop year were approximately \$35M (of which, tree fruits \$15M, Berries \$5M and grain \$14M).
- The Ministry is in the third year of its' three-year renewable reinsurance agreements, which began January 2020. These agreements provide coverage for losses up to 235 percent of annual premiums (approximately \$89M) and ensures that the PISA expenditure budget for claims will not be exceeded. With the high claim year of 2020, the reinsurance program allowed the Program to pay indemnities without having to initiate a Treasury Board submission.

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## Site C – Agricultural Compensation Fund

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

The development of Site C is estimated to permanently displace approximately 3,800 hectares of Class 1 to 5 agricultural lands (land capable of crop production) in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). However, nearly 3M hectares of quality land will remain available for agricultural production in the region.

In recognition of the important role agriculture plays in the Peace River Region and the potential effects of the Site C project on agriculture, BC Hydro has created a \$20M Agricultural Compensation Fund to support agricultural production and related economic activity in the Peace Region. A regional decision-making board is responsible for overseeing the fund's management and disbursement. The 10-member board was appointed in 2018 and consists of six members that are appointees of regional agricultural associations or the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), one member who is a Peace River Valley agricultural producer, and three members-at-large.

As of December 2021, \$1,288,061 in funding has been approved for 53 projects including December 2021 recipients

- BC Grain Producers Association for the Peace Region field research project which aims to improve the sustainability of farms in the region
- Venator Ranches Ltd. in Hudson's Hope for a slaughter, cut and wrap facility that will allow for an increase in the harvest of beef and bison in the Peace Region
- Muddy Creek Livestock Ltd. in Pouce Coupe for a livestock goat handling system
- Allison and Marty Mackay in Taylor for the Peace Region Farm Store which will allow local farmers to sell their produce and allow consumers to purchase a variety of locally produced farm goods in one central location
- North Peace 4-H District Council for a beef announcer booth
- Chetwynd Public Library Association for community gardening literacy
- Wollen Sons Ranch Ltd. for winter watering and shelters
- Wallace and Pam Boring for ranch fencing
- Fort St. John Association for Community Living for growing connections aquaponics
- Joseph Fellers for Cecil Lake Haskap Orchard wildlife fence
- Shaun Cusack for the Sweet Hills Ranch Vermicast farm
- Rafter LT Ranch for water securement
- Carol Nelson for a sheep pasture and handling system
- Niklaus and Therese Rubin for pasture expansion
- Peace River Forage Association of B.C. for knowledge for resilience in the Peace

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- Rafter H Holdings Ltd. for fencing
- Tea Creek Farms Ltd. for grain dryer capacity upgrades
- Simon Loewen for grain cleaning equipment
- Wesland Electric and Controls Inc. (D.B.A. Rafter WL Ranch) for high efficiency grain drying installation

**BACKGROUND:**

- As part of the Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC) approval conditions for the Site C Energy Project (Site C), BC Hydro developed an Agricultural Mitigation and Compensation Plan (Plan).
- The Plan includes a \$20M BC Hydro Peace Agricultural Compensation Fund (Fund), construction management practices, individual farm mitigation plans and an approach to management of surplus agricultural land following construction.
- BC Hydro struck a Consultation Steering Committee (CSC), comprised of staff from BC Hydro, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (AFF) and what is now the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI), that led the consultation process and developed the governance structure for the Fund.
- The final Plan was submitted on July 27, 2017, (within two years after construction start) to the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office, the Peace River Regional District, the District of Hudson's Hope, AFF, EMLI and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD).
- Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) will be paid 10 percent on the annual grant allocation after BC Hydro approves each year's budget. This fee does include NDIT's costs as the Board secretariat and Fund application administrator.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- This file is linked to the BC Food Security Fund – based on Site C revenues – dedicated to supporting farming and enhancing agricultural innovation and productivity in the province.
- The BC Food Security Fund (AFF lead) is not yet framed or scoped out yet as revenues will not be forthcoming until after 2024.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- As of December 2021, \$1,288,061 in funding has been approved for 53 projects

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## Trade – Market Access Concerns

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Market disruptions and global trade uncertainty, particularly as a result of COVID-19, have presented many challenges for B.C. agriculture, food and seafood producers and processors.
- Our Government is committed to continue working closely with the Government of Canada to protect the interests of B.C. workers and their families from any unwarranted international trade investigations and decisions.
- I look forward to continuing working with the B.C. Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation and Government of Canada to ensure that our industry is aware of the many benefits that fall under our country's free trade agreements like the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA); Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP); Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA); and Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).
- I am also encouraged that B.C. is well-positioned to capitalize on new trade diversification opportunities in developing markets around the world.
- The diversity of products that British Columbians grow, produce, raise, harvest, and create is amazing. We are globally recognized for our commitment to produce healthy, safe, and high-quality food to feed growing local and international demand.

### Background:

- Canadian-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA):
  - B.C. continues to work with federal and provincial partners along with industry to collaborate on approach and response to ongoing investigations launched by the U.S. under CUSMA.
  - Legal Panel:
    - Dairy TRQ Legal Panel launched in 2021 found Canada to not be following the spirit of the agreement in dairy processing TRQ allocation.
    - Canada and the U.S. currently negotiating an implementation plan.
  - Fact Finding Investigations:
    - USITC Fact Finding investigation underway for Bell Peppers and Strawberries concluded in 2021 with the U.S. not opting to open a Global Safeguard Investigation.
    - USITC Fact-Finding investigation is underway for Cucumbers and Squash.
- Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP):

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- The UK, China, Taiwan, and Ecuador all applied to join CPTPP in 2021, with the UK on track to ascend in 2022.
- The CPTPP entered into force on December 30, 2018. Currently, nine countries in addition to Canada have ratified the agreement including: Mexico, Japan, Singapore, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Vietnam, Brunei, and Peru. The countries yet to domestically ratify the agreement continue to be Chile and Malaysia.
- Once fully implemented, the CPTPP will form a trading bloc representing 495M consumers and 13.5 percent of global GDP. The elimination of tariffs among the CPTPP signatory countries is expected to make Canadian products more competitive.
- Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA):
  - CETA provisionally applied in September 2017 and is still awaiting full ratification from European nations.
  - No additional countries ratified the agreement in 2021; 15 countries in addition to Canada have ratified the agreement, with Romania and Luxembourg domestically ratifying in 2020. The countries yet to domestically ratify are Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia. Cyprus voted against ratification in 2020.
- Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement:
  - Came into force on April 1, 2021, to provide continuity, predictability, and stability for trade between Canada and the UK.
  - B.C.'s exports grew 35% from 2019-2020 and are expected to continue as the UK continues its FTA negotiations into CPTPP.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- No funding support provided to industry for market access concerns in 2021/22.

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## Trade – Support for Supply Management

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- Our government remains a strong advocate for B.C.'s supply managed sector, both at home and abroad.
- I am proud of the resilience of our dairy, poultry, and egg producers to provide a trusted and consistent supply of safe, reliable, high-quality food to British Columbians during an incredibly challenging time.

### BACKGROUND:

- Supply Management Background
  - In B.C., the dairy, eggs, and poultry (chicken and turkey) industries - BC Dairy, Egg and Poultry Industries (BCDEPI) - operate under a system of supply management.
  - Supply management is a federal-provincial system where production volumes (federal) and imports (federal) are controlled, and producer price (provincial) is set to fulfill the policy objective of a safe steady supply of food for consumers and fair return for efficient farmers.
- Economic Overview
  - The BCDEPI sectors contribute significantly to B.C. agriculture and the B.C. economy.
    - In 2020 (most recent data available), farm cash receipts for the BCDEPI totaled \$1.35B, representing 34% of the provincial total (\$3.0B).
    - Jobs related to the BCDEPI are estimated at 2,900 for dairy and poultry production combined. With the addition of processing, this estimate reaches nearly 6,000 jobs.
- Free-Trade Agreement Concerns
  - Economic Impacts to the Dairy Market:
    - Early estimates from the sector on the cumulative impact to the dairy market [due to Canada-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)] equal approximately ten percent of Canada's production, as well as a decrease of exports close to 50 percent.
  - Import Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ):
    - Canada and the US engaged in a legal dispute panel under CUSMA during 2021 to settle the issue of dairy TRQs in the processing sector. The panel sided with the US, in that Canada was not upholding the spirit of the agreement and gave

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notice to implement changes. Canada and the US are currently in consultation to amend the current TRQ allocations.

- B.C. industry associations and representatives were engaged by Global Affairs Canada, with support from the B.C. government, in February 2021 on new policy options for the allocation of import quotas for supply management products under CUSMA/CPTPP/CETA. These allocations determine who can import supply managed products from abroad at a lower (within access) rate of duty.
- During these consultations, and in written submissions that followed, B.C. industry representatives expressed concerns over the allocation of products to importers that are not actively engaged in the supply management system (e.g. non-processor importers that bring cheese and other products already popular in Canada that are made with highly-subsidized European milk) and are advocating for the majority of the allocation to go to dairy/poultry/egg further processors directly engaged in the supply management system.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Federal Support:
  - In August 2019, Canada announced that it will make available \$1.75B over eight years to supply-managed cow’s milk producers.
  - The Dairy Direct Payment Program provided payments in 2019-20 of \$345M to compensate Canadian cow’s milk producers. These initial payments did not include compensation for CUSMA, as the agreement had not yet been ratified.
  - In November 2020, the government announced the payment schedule for the remaining \$1.405 billion in direct payments over the next three years (amounts are available until March 31 of each year):
    - \$468 million in 2020-21
    - \$469 million in 2021-22
    - \$468 million in 2022-23
- BC producers are eligible for approximately 9% of funding available (\$42M) in 2022/23, based on provincial shares of national quota on October 31, 2020.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- No funding support provided to industry for supply management in 2021/22.

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## Tree Fruit and Nut – Tree Fruit Stabilization Plan

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- B.C.'s tree fruit industry includes about 800 growers managing 12,840 acres of tree fruit, largely in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Creston Valleys. Apples constitute roughly 6,677 acres of this total.
- Industry has voiced concerns regarding declining returns over the last 5 years, particularly apple growers.
- Financial hardships have been compounded recently because of increased supply chain issues and labour costs due to COVID-19 and unprecedented weather events.
- The Ministry shares the concerns about the circumstances facing apple producers and the potential loss of apple production on ALR land if the situation does not improve.
- The Ministry has provided over \$86.5M in financial support to the tree fruit industry in the last five years through funding and programs such as:
  - Production Insurance,
  - AgriStability Enhancement program,
  - Agri-Invest program,
  - Tree Fruit Replant Program, and
  - Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund.
- However, it appears growers are not seeing benefits from these investments.
- By stabilizing the tree fruit sector, we can improve food security and local economic growth, aligning with the priorities in my Mandate Letter.
- Many studies of the industry have been conducted in recent years, with recurring recommendations that did not get implemented due to a lack of leadership in the industry.
- As a result, in February 2021, the Ministry launched an ambitious workplan to assess the industry's circumstances and determine how best to address those challenges.
- A Steering Committee composed of agencies and organizations in the sector informed the development of the Stabilization Plan.
- Industry members unanimously endorsed the Plan and the 19 recommendations in it (see Appendix B for recommendations).
- In November 2021, we released the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan (titled: *A Path Forward: A Blueprint for B.C.'s Tree Fruit Industry*).
- Membership in the steering committee has been expanded to support implementation (see Appendix A for membership). Implementation has been started.
- It took many years for B.C.'s tree fruit sector to get into the current difficult financial circumstances. Recovery will not be easy, but the Ministry is committed to helping this iconic B.C. industry do just that.

**BACKGROUND:**

- 2018-2020 had regular declines in the average financial return to apple growers (grower return) well below the industry estimated \$0.30/lb Cost of Production (CoP). 2019 marked the lowest price in recent history of \$0.12/lb for apples.
- The planted apple acreage has dropped from 8,781 acres in 2018 to 6,677 acres in 2020. Much of this land is being converted to cherry and wine grape crops.
- Over 75 percent of the apples produced in B.C. are sold within western Canada however this only supplies a fraction of B.C.'s retail demand. Imports, primarily from Washington State and New Zealand fill the gap.
- The Ministry partnered with B.C. Tree Fruit Cooperative (BCTF) in August 2020 to successfully help stabilize their leadership and modernize their governance with ongoing collaboration.
- Building on this success, the Ministry formed the Tree Fruit Advisory Group made up of key industry stakeholders to form a workplan for developing a plan to stabilize and revitalize B.C.'s tree fruit sector.
- The internal project team consists of two FTE Ministry staff with strong ties to the tree fruit sector, senior Ministry management, and support from staff in several Ministry branches.
- Working with the internal project team, Derek Sturko of Inner Harbour Consulting has been retained as a contractor to support industry engagement, lead development of the Stabilization Plan, and implementation strategies.
- The work plan included:
  - Extensive consultation with all parts of the industry (growers, packers, etc.)
  - Analysis of current and past industry studies, organization roles and responsibilities, cross-jurisdictional review of other apple and cherry industries, and data.
  - Audit and assessment of the government funded Tree Fruit Replant Program and Competitive Fund.
- The engagement sessions in 2021 with tree fruit industry stakeholders highlighted many factors contributing to the current financial challenges faced by the B.C. apple industry.
  - In contrast to Washington, there has been a notable fragmentation of the tree fruit packers within the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys leading to increased internal competition for buyers in the rapidly consolidating retail sector, resulting in downward pricing pressures that are passed onto growers.
  - Fragmentation has been the result of ongoing leadership and governance challenges in the tree fruit industry with no clear long term strategic plan.
  - Structural rigidity and outdated long-standing approaches of some organizations have made it difficult for industry to respond efficiently to challenges and work cooperatively and collaboratively.
  - Lack of industry data for making informed decisions and strategies.

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- Loss of extension services and industry wide focus on fruit quality to meet increasing premium market demands.
- Labour shortages, training, and associated costs (such as housing, transportation, administration).
- Restrictions to agricultural land use needs by producers imposed by local governments and Agricultural Land Reserve legislation.
- Implementation has been initiated, beginning with some of the foundational recommendations (see Appendix B for Recommendation details).
  - Data Strategy (Recommendation 2)
  - Labour (Recommendation 3)
  - Extension services (Recommendation 4)
  - Variety access and development (Recommendation 5)
  - SIR assessment (Recommendation 10)
  - One-time financial support payment to apple growers (Recommendation 12)
  - Definition of a Bona Fide Farmer and benefits to encourage commercial farmers (Recommendation 17)

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C. produced 104 018 MT of apples in 2019 with grower farm cash receipts (FCR) \$67M. Apple production dropped to 91 423 MT in 2020.
- B.C. is tied with Quebec for Canada’s second largest apple producer after Ontario.
- Despite 86 percent of B.C.’s apple supplying Canadian markets, in 2019/20 B.C.’s apple exports exceeded \$17M.
- The majority of B.C. apple export activity was to the United States and Vietnam.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- Over the past five-years, government has supported the tree fruit industry with over \$86.5M provided through:
  - \$55.5M from AgriInsurance 2017-2021 crop year claims.
  - \$17.5M from AgriStability and B.C.’s AgriStability enhancement programs for the 2017-2020 program years.
  - \$5.5M paid into producer’s AgriInvest accounts for the 2017-2020 program years.
  - \$3M for Tree Fruit Replant Program
  - \$5M for Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund
- Two FTE Ministry staff will be assigned to this project, and additional support will be on an as-needed basis.
- Advice/Recommendations

|                     |                         |                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Approved by:</b> | <b>Prepared by:</b>     | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
| Name: Arif Lalani   | Name: Lindsay Hainstock | Name: Adrian Arts         |

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

|                     |                    |                     |
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- One 8-month TA position will start March 2022 to provide additional support.

**TREE FRUIT AND NUT – TREE FRUIT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION PLAN  
ESSB****APPENDIX A****TREE FRUIT INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

## Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Representatives

| Name                     | Title  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Mark Raymond</b>      | Executive Director, Extension Services and Support Branch              |
| <b>Georgina Beyers</b>   | Director, Industry Development   |
| <b>Adrian Arts</b>       | Industry Specialist, Tree Fruit and Grapes                             |
| <b>Lindsay Hainstock</b> | Industry Advisor, Horticulture   |
| <b>Mat Patterson</b>     | Director, Market Development and Trade                                 |
| <b>Mike Renaud</b>       | Director, Sector Insights & Corporate Initiatives                      |
| <b>James Griffith</b>    | Manager, Policy and Product Development, Business Development Division |
| <b>Derek Sturko</b>      | CEO, Inner Harbour Consulting Inc.                                     |

## Industry Representatives

| Name                           | Title  | Organization                                 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Dr. Rachid El Hafid</b>     | Director, Research and Development – BC      | Agriculture and Agrifood Canada (AAFC)       |
| <b>Dr. Nidhi Sharma</b>        | Senior Policy Advisor                        |  |
| <b>Laureen Tang</b>            | Senior Industry Development Officer          |  |
| <b>Jesse MacDonald</b>         | Knowledge and Technology Transfer Specialist |  |
| <b>Jeet Dhukia</b>             | Vice-President                               | BC Fruit Growers' Association                |
| <b>Avi Gill</b>                | Board Member                                 |  |
| <b>Sukhpaul Bal</b>            | President                                    | BC Cherry Association                        |
| <b>Madeleine van Roechoudt</b> | Vice-Chair                                   | New Tree Fruit Varieties Development Council |
| <b>Melissa Tesche</b>          | General Manager                              | Sterile Insect Release Program               |
| <b>Amy Richards</b>            | Chair  | BC Grapegrowers Association                  |

**TREE FRUIT INDUSTRY STABILIZATION IMPLEMENTATION STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**MEMBERSHIP**

## Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Representatives

| Name                     | Title   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Mark Raymond</b>      | Executive Director, Extension Services and Support Branch |
| <b>Adrian Arts</b>       | Industry Specialist, Tree Fruit and Grapes                |
| <b>Lindsay Hainstock</b> | Industry Advisor, Horticulture                            |
| <b>Derek Sturko</b>      | CEO, Inner Harbour Consulting Inc.                        |

## Industry Representatives

| Name                          | Title  | Organization                                 |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Dr. Rachid El Hafid</b>    | Director, Research and Development – BC      | Agriculture and Agrifood Canada (AAFC)       |
| <b>Dr. Nidhi Sharma</b>       | Senior Policy Advisor                        |  |
| <b>Natalie Belisle</b>        | Deputy Director, NW Regional Office          |  |
| <b>Shirley Choi</b>           | Senior Industry Development Officer          |  |
| <b>Jesse MacDonald</b>        | Knowledge and Technology Transfer Specialist |  |
| <b>Lindsay McCoubrey</b>      | Policy Analyst                               | Agricultural Land Commission                 |
| <b>Jeet Dhukia</b>            | Vice-President                               | BC Fruit Growers' Association                |
| <b>Glen Lucas</b>             | General Manager                              |  |
| <b>Sukhpaul Bal</b>           | President                                    | BC Cherry Association                        |
| <b>Beth Cavers</b>            | Administrative Officer                       |  |
| <b>Madeleine van Roehoudt</b> | Vice-Chair                                   | New Tree Fruit Varieties Development Council |
| <b>Melissa Tesche</b>         | General Manager                              | Sterile Insect Release Program               |
| <b>Sean Beirnes</b>           | General Manager                              | Summerland Variety Corporation               |
| <b>John Bayley</b>            | President                                    | BC Grapegrowers Association                  |
| <b>Tyrion Miskell</b>         | Administrative Officer                       |  |
| <b>Avi Gill</b>               | Co-Owner                                     | Farming Karma Soda                           |
| <b>Miles Prodan</b>           | CEO & President                              | Wine Growers BC                              |
| <b>Warren Sarafinchan</b>     | CEO  | BC Tree Fruits Cooperative                   |
| <b>Gurjinder Sandher</b>      | Co-Owner                                     | Sandher Fruit Packers                        |
| <b>Jarnail Gill</b>           | Owner/Operator                               | Blossom River Organics Ltd.                  |
| <b>Dariel Trottier</b>        | President                                    | Consolidated Fruit Packers Ltd.              |

## **APPENDIX B**

### **19 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STABILIZATION PLAN: A Path Forward: A Blueprint for B.C.'s Tree Fruit Industry**

1. LEADERSHIP: It is recommended a new industry agency be established to provide leadership, governance, and planning for the industry. The agency should be governed by board members appointed from key industry organizations and independent members with relevant skills and experience identified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.
2. DATA STRATEGY: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries facilitate the development and implementation of a data strategy for the tree fruit sector.
3. LABOUR: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries develop a comprehensive agriculture-centric labour strategy, make its expertise more accessible to industry and decision makers, and support the industry's efforts to access labour pools.
4. EXTENSION SERVICES: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries enhance its support of, and contribution to, horticulture and extension services.
5. NEW VARIETIES: It is recommended that industry leadership collectively establish a comprehensive process to support the acquisition, development, commercialization, and marketing of new varieties and new value-added products.
6. MARKETING & SALES: It is recommended that Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries work with industry to develop and implement a coordinated 5-to-10-year Market Development Strategy for B.C. produced tree fruit(s). This strategy would identify priority markets for market access, development, and maintenance and include a rolling 2–3-year industry marketing and sales plan.
7. RETAIL: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries continue to work with its federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts to implement a retail code of practice.
8. FRUIT QUALITY: It is recommended that globally competitive and consistent fruit quality standards and criteria be developed by industry, with a supporting marketing strategy.
9. INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY: It is recommended the industry determine and act on ways that innovation and technology can support the sector.

10. SIR: It is recommended an assessment of the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Program be conducted to determine the value the Program provides to the apple industry. If the Program is determined to be critical to the success of the industry and its viability is at risk, funding models that could be put in place to support the producer portion of Program costs should be considered.

11. CLIMATE CHANGE: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, in partnership with other agencies, develop a program to support the development of local irrigation systems to accommodate the impact of drought, climate change, and water shortages on B.C.'s agriculture industry (including the tree fruit sector).

12. ONE-TIME FINANCIAL PAYMENT: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries investigate opportunities to respond to requests from some organizations in the B.C. tree fruit sector to provide one-time support to producers experiencing difficult financial circumstances.

13. GOVERNMENT FUNDING REQUIREMENTS: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries realign the way it provides financial contributions to the tree fruit industry or individual farmers in support of sound business management practices.

14. COMPETITIVE FUND: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries ensure any expenditures from the Tree Fruit Competitiveness Program (TFCP) reflect key elements of the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan. Financial contributions from the Fund should support initiatives that have sound business rationale (as defined above) and whole sector benefits.

15. REPLANT PROGRAM: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries consider some form of program focused on supporting industry efforts to plant commodities that are commercially viable and include modern varieties, proven to grow well under local climactic conditions and offer significant and reasonable market opportunities for B.C. farmers.

16. MINISTRY PROGRAM DELIVERY: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries improve understanding and application of several Ministry programs that will benefit the full agriculture industry.

17. BONA FIDE FARMER: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries establish a method to distinguish persons who are actively farming and producing agricultural products from persons who own land which is generally used for non-agriculture purposes (especially as it relates to land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)).

18. ALR: It is recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries work with the Agricultural Land Commission to achieve the Commission's stated objective to ensure agricultural production remains the primary use of the Agricultural Land Reserve while supporting economic opportunities for farmers to be financially viable.

19. LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries work with local governments to coordinate approaches to the industry.

## Hazelnut & Raspberry Revitalization and Replant

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Hazelnut Renewal Program was launched in July 2018 to incentivize the replacement of orchards infected with Eastern Filbert Blight (EFB) with new disease-resistant varieties, and to expand hazelnut acreage in B.C. with new plantings.
- The Raspberry Replant Program was launched in December 2020 to incentivize the planting of raspberry varieties with suitability for fresh and Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) raspberries.
- The Ministry administers the Hazelnut Renewal and Raspberry Replant Programs. The B.C. Hazelnut Growers Association and the B.C. Raspberry Industry Development Council are partners in renewal/replant program design and delivery.
- The Ministry has a full time Industry Specialist to work with the berry industry and a full time Industry Specialist to work with emerging markets, including the hazelnut industry.

### BACKGROUND:

#### HAZELNUTS:

- There are approximately 40 hazelnut producers farming an estimated 350 acres of hazelnuts mostly in the Chilliwack-Agassiz region, where climate and soils are favorable for growing. Hazelnuts are a low input crop.
- Eastern Filbert Blight (EFB) caused the collapse of hazelnut production in B.C., from 1.1 million pounds in 2013 to 29,000 pounds in 2016.
- New EFB resistant varieties from Oregon are being planted in B.C. Producers have retained hazelnut production knowledge and processing capacity exists.
- B.C.'s hazelnut industry is very small compared to Oregon State, which is its direct competitor. B.C. produced about 33 tons in 2021 compared with the forecasted 65,000 tons produced by Oregon in the same year.
- There are value-added processing opportunities for hazelnuts.
- The Hazelnut Renewal Program (HRP) was launched in 2018 to incentivize growers to remove diseased orchards and to plant new, EFB-resistant hazelnut varieties. The program has funded the removal of 52 acres and planting of 247 acres of hazelnuts since 2018.
- The B.C. Hazelnut Growers Association (BCHGA) provides input into HRP design and delivery and promotes the program to industry.

#### RASPBERRIES:

- Refer to *Estimates Note: Market Impacts on Raspberries* for background on the B.C. raspberry industry.

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- Opportunities for increased domestic sales of fresh and IQF raspberries were identified through a CAP-funded Market Opportunities Assessment for B.C. Berries in March 2020.
- The Raspberry Replant Program (RRP) was launched in December 2020 to incentivize the planting of raspberry varieties with suitability for fresh and Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) raspberries.
- The B.C. Raspberry Industry Development Council (RIDC) provides input into RRP design and delivery and promotes the program to industry.
- The RRP provided \$104,000 in funding to producers for 46 acres of new raspberry plantings in spring 2021 and has committed to fund 76 acres of new raspberry plantings in 2022.

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- Hazelnut and raspberry renewal/replant programs are not offered in other provinces.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- 0.3 FTE has been allocated to the hazelnut sector as the Industry Specialist.
- 1.0 FTE position has been allocated to the berry sector as the Industry Specialist.
- The HRP funded \$300,000 in producer reimbursements from 2018 to 2020, \$100,000 in 2021-2022, and has budgeted \$100,000 for the HRP in 2022-2023.
- The BCHGA received 10 percent of HRP funding (\$8,400-\$10,400 annually) from 2018-2020 for their assistance with HRP delivery. The BCHGA will receive \$7000 respectively in 2021-22 and 2022-2023.
- The RRP funded \$104K in producer reimbursements in 2020-21 and has budgeted for \$181,000 for producer reimbursements in 2022-23.
- The RIDC received \$9,000 in 2021 and will receive \$7,000 in 2022 for their assistance with RRP delivery.
- Under the Canadian Agriculture Partnership, additional research has been funded:
  - Emerging diseases and their impact on hazelnuts, 3 years, total funding \$180,000.
  - Emerging Pests, Lower Mainland Horticulture, 5 years, total funding of \$150,000.
  - B.C. Hazelnut Participatory On-Farm Trial Network, 1-year, total funding \$16,500.
- Refer to the *Estimates Note: Market Impacts on Raspberries* for details on other provincial supports to the raspberry industry.

| Approved by:        | Prepared by:           | Prepared by:             |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
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## Tree Fruit and Nut – Tree Fruit Replant Program

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The current Tree Fruit Replant Program (TFRP) was launched in 2015 as a seven-year, \$9.4M framework aimed at supporting B.C.'s tree fruit producers' efforts to meet consumer demand for high value, high quality B.C. fruit. This past year was the final year of the current iteration of the Replant Program.
- Following up on one of the recommendations with the Tree Fruit Stabilization Plan, the Ministry will be exploring the potential for future replant programming.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (the Ministry) was able to support producers in replanting over 2000 acres, well in excess of the initial target of 1600 acres.
- The TFRP had been administered by the BC Fruit Growers Association (BCFGA) from 2015-2020, through single and multi-year contracts.
- Challenges in the relationship with the BCFGAs staff necessitated outlining clearer accountabilities and a more defined reporting structure to ensure due diligence in program delivery. The BCFGAs was unwilling to be held accountable for the final administrative year of the contract.
- Ministry staff assumed the administrative responsibilities for the remainder of the final 2021/22 program year.
- Internal administration of the program benefited producers through faster payment of funds and benefited the Ministry through reduced costs to administer the program.
- In July 2021 a third-party assessment of the financial, administrative, and operational capacity of the TFRP was undertaken by KPMG. It is nearing completion, and a final report will be available in early March 2022.
- Difficulties were encountered by the consultants in requesting and obtaining program documents from the BCFGAs which has resulted in significant delays to the delivery of the final document.

### BACKGROUND:

- The tree fruit industry is composed of approximately 800 growers managing 12,840 acres of tree fruit crops in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Creston Valleys and growing interest in apple production in other areas of the province.
- A seven-year, \$8.4M TFRP was introduced November 2014, with a program launch in April 2015. The B.C. Government added \$1M to that commitment bringing the total available to \$9.4M.
- The program was co-developed with the BCFGAs and continues to be strongly supported by industry.

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- The BCFGAs are industry associations representing B.C. fruit growers' interests through activities which include lobbying government and providing services and products to growers.
- In the last 5 years of the Replant program:
  - Apples made up 83 percent of total trees approved for payment. There was a steady increase in apple planting up until FY2017/2018, when cherries overtook total acreage being replanted.
  - Cherry plantings made up 15 percent of all trees approved for payment. However, they had a net increase in plantings over the years with 2020 and 2021 as the highest number of trees per year.
- The current funding is in its final year, ending March 31, 2022.
- As part of the Ministry's commitment under the Tree Fruit Stabilization and Renewal Plan, a third-party assessment of the financial, administrative, and operational capacity of the TFRP was undertaken by KPMG in July 2021.
- KPMG had to delay the completion date of the assessment twice due to delays with problems accessing requested documentation. BCFGAs refused to provide some of the requested documents despite contractual obligations.
- BCFGAs terminated their employee responsible for administration of the program for 6 of the years and signed a non-disclosure agreement with them to prevent them from communicating with the TFRP assessment or the Ministry.
- Initial findings noted:
  - Overall, industry is highly supportive of the program, and believes it has helped increase the ability of the industry to remain competitive in the market.
  - Administrative controls and deliverables were insufficient to meet contractual obligations,
  - Ongoing lack of clarity around conflict of interest of advisory committee members,
  - Lack of a long-term marketing and sales plan had reduced the overall impact of the program.
  - Major issues in the tree fruit industry must be addressed before a successful replant program can be re-initiated. The replant program should be viewed as part of a holistic approach to increase the success of the industry and long-term industry plan is needed to help growers know what to invest in replanting.
  - More stringent criteria for selection of an Administrator for program delivery and stronger enforcement of the Administration contract by the Ministry to ensure integrity, openness, and transparency.
- One of the recommendations in the Tree Fruit Stabilization Plan that the Ministry will be further exploring is *"It is recommended the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries consider some form of program focused on supporting industry efforts to plant commodities that are commercially viable and include modern varieties, proven to grow well under local climactic conditions and offer significant and reasonable market opportunities for B.C. farmers."*

**TABLE 1: FUNDED FRUIT TREE PLANTINGS**

|                  | Actual Projected |      |      |      |      |      |      | Total        |
|------------------|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|
|                  | 2015             | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |              |
| Total # of acres | 207              | 230  | 374  | 229  | 330  | 362  | 283  | <b>2,015</b> |
| Total # of trees | 325K             | 344K | 497K | 340K | 337K | 213K | 180K | <b>2.2M</b>  |

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- B.C.'s tree fruit industry is very small compared to its direct competitor (Washington state) to the south. B.C. produces approximately four million boxes of apples compared to Washington states' 130M boxes annually.
- Despite the relative size of the industry, B.C. continues to produce high quality, high value apples and cherries, capitalizing on competitive advantages of late season harvest and superior variety selection for worldwide transport.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- The program invests approximately \$1.2M per year in the Okanagan/Similkameen and Creston Valleys assisting the tree fruit industry.
- FY21/22 had a significant drop in amount paid to producers following inspections compared to what was originally approved due to problems with nursery tree supplies impacted by winter losses.
- Total number of approved Tree Fruit Replant Applications in FY21/22 was 100.
- Total amount paid out to producers in FY21/22 is \$818K.

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|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
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## Tree Fruit and Nut – Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- In February 2018, the Minister announced a \$5M dollar Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund (TFCF) targeted at supporting infrastructure, marketing, research, and potential Replant Program shortfalls.
- Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) and the BC Fruit Growers Association (BCFGA) co-administer the funds and undertook an industry wide consultative strategic plan to guide the fund expenditures.
- Despite this fund, the tree fruit industry (apples in particular) has claimed they are under increasing financial hardship and continue to lobby through the BCFGGA for additional financial supports to tree fruit producers.
- On December 14, 2020, notification was sent from the Assistant Deputy Minister, Arif Lalani to the BCFGGA and IAF informing them of an immediate pause on the TFCF pending a third-party operational and financial review.
- Audits and assessments play a necessary role in sound program management and are part of a responsible oversight of public funds. While we certainly appreciate that they can cause disruption, these audits should be viewed as intended, which is as an appropriate and sometimes necessary function of good governance.
- The assessment noted that IAF was fair and consistent with review of project objectives and deliverables, however, several suggestions for improvement to the governance of the Program were highlighted that should be considered moving forward for better program delivery and accountability.
- Over the past three years, 19 projects have been approved, valued at approx. \$2.62M. Of these, 11 projects remain active and are scheduled to be completed by March 31, 2023.
- AFF is currently reviewing the recommendations of the Tree Fruit Competitiveness Audit to identify next steps and optimal use of the fund moving forward.

### BACKGROUND:

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (the Ministry) announced the TFCF in Kelowna on February 2018, at the BCFGGA Annual General Meeting and provided IAF with the TFCF as a grant on March 28, 2018.
- IAF entered into a five-year collaborative Agreement with BCFGGA to co-administer the TFCF. A roles and responsibilities document was developed and signed by BCFGGA and IAF in September 2018. Under this agreement:
  - BCFGGA leads application development, outreach/advertising, project review and

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- communication of project results to industry and government.
- IAF receives new project applications, manages contracting, project reporting, Direct Participant Payments, summarizing project outcomes, and fund accounting.
  - BCFGGA allocated \$3.5M for “competitiveness” and the remaining \$1.5M be set aside for top-up of the TFRP.
  - A cost sharing formula, between IAF and BCFGGA, of the 10 percent of the fund for administration costs was also established.
    - BCFGGA receives 4 percent of the \$3.5M competitiveness fund - \$140K
    - BCFGGA receives 10 percent of the \$1.5M replant top-up fund - \$150K
    - BCFGGA receives \$75K for industry support services
    - IAF receives 6 percent of the \$3.5M competitiveness fund - \$210K
  - A 2018 industry study recommended that the TFCF should increase efficiency, sales, and productivity levels through projects that support:
    - Infrastructure: modernization, such as new or innovative equipment.
    - Marketing: exploring export market opportunities and market development research.
    - Research: cultivator, disease, and pest research.
  - The BCFGGA struck a Technical Review Committee (TRC) composed of its members and industry stakeholders to review and rate all incoming projects, and to provide those recommendations to the IAF Board Committee
  - The co-administration between the BCFGGA and IAF has been tenuous, with regular delays in reporting, due in part, to a lack of administrative capacity and organization by the BCFGGA.
  - In June 2021, the BCFGGA provided written notice to IAF removing themselves as administrators of the fund leaving IAF as the sole administrator of the TFCF.
  - The Ministry secured KPMG as the firm to execute the operational and financial review and have outlined a work plan with completion of the project no later than the end of April 2021.
  - The assessment provided the following recommendations for improvements to the administration of the TFCF:
    - Improved communication and information of Program goals and expectations to tree fruit industry.
    - Establish timelines for program processes (such as: application intakes, approvals, deadlines, and communication of decisions) and committee meetings.
    - Implement documented evaluation process by BCFGGA Technical Review Committee and IAF Adjudication Committee.
    - Define the roles and responsibilities of administrators and committees with emphasis on accountability.
    - Establishment of a formal reporting mechanism back to the Ministry for strategic planning and Program review along with a formal process to address and

implement changes when needed.

Funding Status – as of January 29, 2022

|                              | 2018-19   | 2019/20     | 2020/21   | 2021/22   | 2022/23   | Total       |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Approved Project Funding     | \$562,694 | \$1,243,192 | \$656,602 | -         | -         | \$2,623,588 |
| Decommitments to Date        | \$458,408 | \$19,064    | \$2,042   | -         | -         | \$479,514   |
| Paid to Date                 | -         | \$240,230   | \$499,592 | \$432,543 | -         | \$1,172,365 |
| Remaining Scheduled Payments | -         | -           | -         | \$194,488 | \$777,222 | \$971,710   |

Project Status – as of January 29, 2022

|                              | 2018-19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | Total |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Projects Approved            | 4       | 5       | 10      | 0       | 19    |
| Projects Withdrawn/Cancelled | 2       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 2     |
| Projects Completed           | 2       | 3       | 1       | 0       | 6     |
| Active Projects              | 0       | 2       | 9       | 0       | 11    |

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- N/A

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- As of January 31, 2022:
  - Total funding commitment for TFC Projects to date is \$1.98M of the initial \$5M.
  - Total value paid out to date is \$1.17M.
  - Total funding commitment for Tree Fruit Replant top-up is \$0.
  - Administration expenses:
    - BCFGAs - \$39,124
    - IAF - \$142,667
  - \$212,100 allocated to support development and implementation of the Tree Fruit Stabilization Plan (of which \$162,750 has been paid as Inner Harbour Consulting payment).
  - The fund has accrued interest totalling \$965,661 of investment income.
  - Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial

|                     |                         |                           |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Approved by:</b> | <b>Prepared by:</b>     | <b>Alternate Contact:</b> |
| Name: Arif Lalani   | Name: Lindsay Hainstock | Name: Adrian Arts         |
| Date approved:      | Branch: ESSB            | Branch: ESSB              |

C o n f i d e n t i a l   A d v i c e   t o   M i n i s t e r

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## Support for B.C. Wine

### RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

- The Province is strongly committed to supporting our B.C wine-making industry.
- B.C.'s vineyards and over 370 wineries provide good jobs and have established an international reputation for quality wines.
- The B.C. Government will continue to work with the wine industry to support trade and promotion of our B.C. wines in domestic and international markets
- Over the past year, our government has supported B.C.'s wine industry in many ways:
  - Significant cost-shared funding to B.C. wine organizations for local and international market development through the Buy BC Partnership Program and B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program.
  - The development of a comprehensive Beverage Sector Framework, including benchmarking, to assist the growth and resilience of B.C.'s beverage sector.
  - Ministry support of the Province's Business Technical Advisory Panel to modernize liquor laws and policy in B.C. in collaboration with B.C.'s alcoholic beverage sector.
- B.C. is achieving world-wide recognition as an international award-winning, premier wine region.
- We look forward to continuing to celebrate the continued success of the B.C. Wine industry.

### BACKGROUND:

- B.C. is home to 929 vineyards. Of B.C.'s 370 licensed wineries, 284 are grape wineries, with the remaining being fruit wineries.
- B.C.'s wine industry employs approximately 12,000 people and has an economic impact of \$2.8 billion annually (see Appendix for breakdown of the wine industry workforce).
- In 2019, B.C. exported \$6.4 million in wine, a drop of 30% from 2018. Exports to China in 2019 fell 30% to \$4.7 million.
- Combined sales from B.C. breweries, wineries and distilleries amounted to \$1.42 billion in 2019, up 10.7% from 2018.
- B.C. wine industry faces several challenges include significant excise costs, low import tariff barriers, competition from global imports and lack of access to the national market through direct sales

**CROSS JURISDICTIONAL COMPARISON:**

- In 2019, B.C.'s wine industry ranked third among Canadian provinces in beverage processing sales.

**PROGRAM EXPENDITURE / REVENUE IMPLICATION:**

- \$145K to support 7 wineries and wine associations/ organizations through the B.C. Agri-Food and Seafood Market Development Program to conduct market research, marketing/export planning and/or export market development activities, including the West Kelowna Vintners Association (\$11K), Wine Growers British Columbia Society (\$46K) and Naramata Bench Wineries Association (\$25K).
  - \$262K in total funding provided to support 7 BC wineries and 4 wine associations in 2021-22 through the Buy BC Partnership Program, including Advice/Recommendations
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- \$40K for the B.C. Wine Centre of Excellence action plan.
  - \$35K to develop of a comprehensive Beverage Sector Framework, including benchmarking, to better understand and support future Ministry actions and partnerships to assist the growth and resilience of B.C.'s beverage sector and sub-sectors
  - \$20k for Sustainable Wine BC.

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