



# **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:**

- Mitchell'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.



