

# Transition Binder



Ministry of  
Agriculture  
and Food

**October 21, 2022**

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# Appendix A

## MINISTRY PROFILE

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Ministry) ensures that food produced in the province is safe and accessible to British Columbians. Ministry programming supports producers and processors to grow and be more resilient with the aim to improve the food security in the province while also creating economic development opportunities.

The Ministry is responsible for:

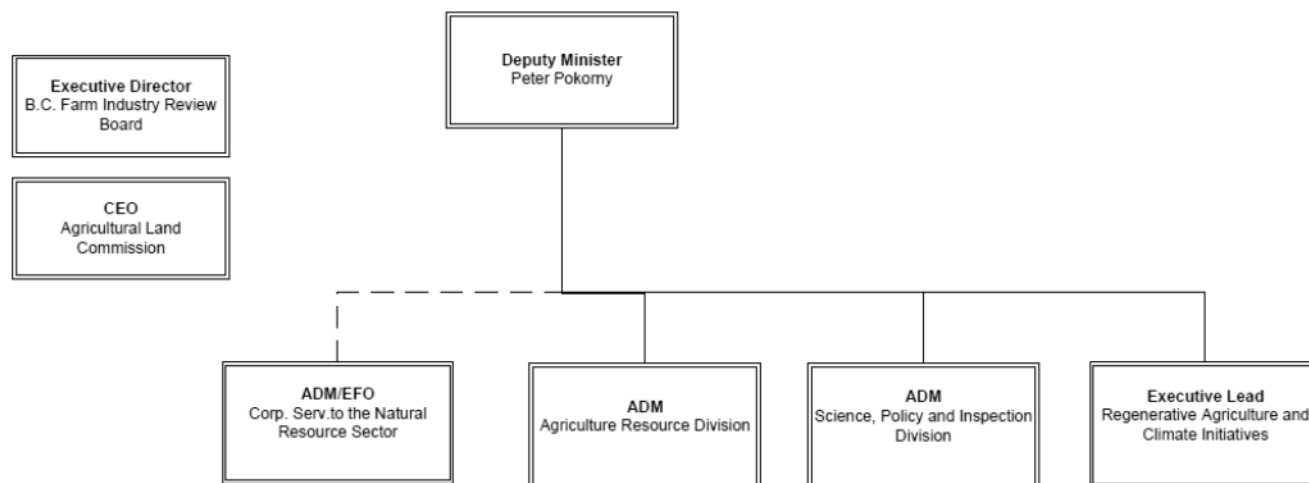
- the production, processing, marketing and merchandising of agriculture and seafood products;
- the institution and carrying out of advisory, research, promotional, sustainability and adaptation, food safety and plant and animal health programs, projects and undertakings relating to agriculture and seafood;
- playing a critical part in providing tools for farmers to manage both production and financial risks and are essential to encourage and foster continued investment in the sector; and
- the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture and seafood.

The Ministry supports B.C. producers and processors to grow and process more food, making more food available to British Columbian consumers and marketing it under the Buy BC brand. As well, the Ministry is building innovation and technology to make B.C. a global leader in food security and views agritech and regenerative agriculture as approaches that will help the province work towards a secure food supply. The agriculture, seafood and food and beverage sector is a key contributor to economic development and diversification across the Province, particularly for small businesses and rural areas. The sector also creates economic and social benefits for Indigenous and other underrepresented groups, has the potential to attract investment to the province and contributes to workforce development and skills training.

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 30 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the Ministry. A complete list of legislation for which the Ministry is responsible is available online (<https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/amr/amr/1135179498>).

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs): 414

Executive Organizational Chart:





Budget:

<b>Core Business Area</b>	<b>2021/22 Restated Estimates<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2022/23 Estimates</b>	<b>2023/24 Plan</b>	<b>2024/25 Plan</b>
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Science, Policy, and Inspection	16,146	19,086	20,086	20,086
Agriculture Resources	56,463	61,433	61,433	61,433
BC Farm Industry Review Board	1,378	1,378	1,378	1,378
Executive and Support Services	6,801	6,923	6,934	6,934
Agricultural Land Commission	5,001	5,001	5,001	5,001
Production Insurance Account Special Account	13,200	13,200	13,200	13,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,989</b>	<b>107,021</b>	<b>108,032</b>	<b>108,032</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
Executive and Support Services	755	1,229	777	777
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>1,229</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>777</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 B

## CORE BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREAS / BUSINESS PROCESSES

Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)

Chief Executive Officer: Kim Grout

The purposes of the ALC as set out in Section 6 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act are:

- a) To preserve agricultural land;
- b) To encourage farming in collaboration with other communities of interest; and
- c) To 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;

To fulfill its purposes the Commission must give priority as set out in section 6 to protecting and enhancing all of the following when exercising its powers and performing its duties under this Act:

- a) The size, integrity and continuity of the land base of the agricultural land reserve;
- b) The use of the agricultural land reserve for farm use.

The work of the ALC is carried out by up to nineteen Commission members appointed from six administrative regions of the province who are collectively the board of directors of the ALC. The Chair of the Commission is appointed by Order in Council of Cabinet and all other members of the Commission are appointed by Ministerial Order. The Full Commission consisting of all members of the board, meet twice a year to carry out a variety of duties, including the passing policies, resolutions and bylaws governing the conduct of its affairs. Decisions on applications for changes to the ALR boundaries or use or subdivision in the ALR are made by panels of 2 or more Commissioners appointed from the membership by the Chair of the ALC.

The Commission on average adjudicates (decides) on between 500 -700 applications, notices, requests for reconsideration, and appeals of C&E actions each year. The vast majority of the applications to the ALC, involve requests to conduct uses and activities not permitted by regulation in the ALR. The Chair of the Commission has appointed seven decision-making panels, one for each of the six administrative regions in the province, that are responsible for deciding applications received in those regions for subdivision, non-farm use, exclusion, inclusion, and non-adhering residential use, and one panel that decides on soil and fill use applications for the entire province.

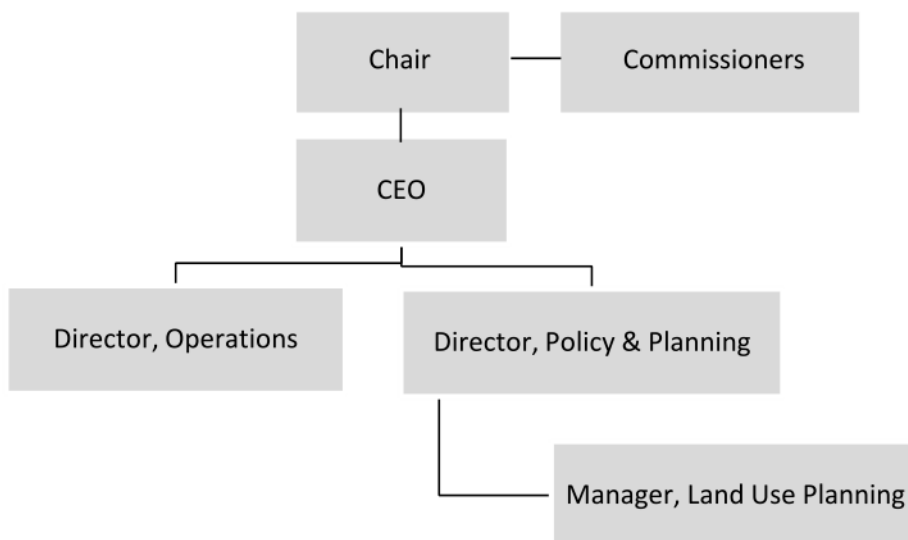
Budget:

Core Business Area	2021/2022 Restated Estimates	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Plan	2024/25 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Agricultural Land Commission</b>	5,001	5,001	5,001	5,001

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs): 40

Related Legislation: Agricultural Land Commission Act.

Organizational Chart:



## CORE BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREAS / BUSINESS PROCESSES

Agriculture Resource Division  
ADM Responsible: Arif Lalani

The Agriculture Resource Division (ARD) provides for provincial and federal-provincial agricultural risk management programs, insurance schemes and funding of programs and trusts; regional sector support in emergency management; support for agrifood industry growth, agrifood business development, youth development, agroforestry, and promotion of public support for the agriculture food sector. It also funds initiatives related to strengthening farming programs, including partnerships with industry, local governments and others to manage land use planning, resolve management issues and identify opportunities. ARD provides for agri-environmental initiatives supporting program development, addressing environmental risks to and from the sector; development of beneficial management practices; innovation and domestic and international marketing programs; and, is responsible for the development and implementation of a fully functional premise identification registry that is interoperable with the national traceability system.

The Agriculture Resource Division is comprised of three branches:

- Business Risk Management
- Extension and Support Services
- Food and Beverage

Budget:

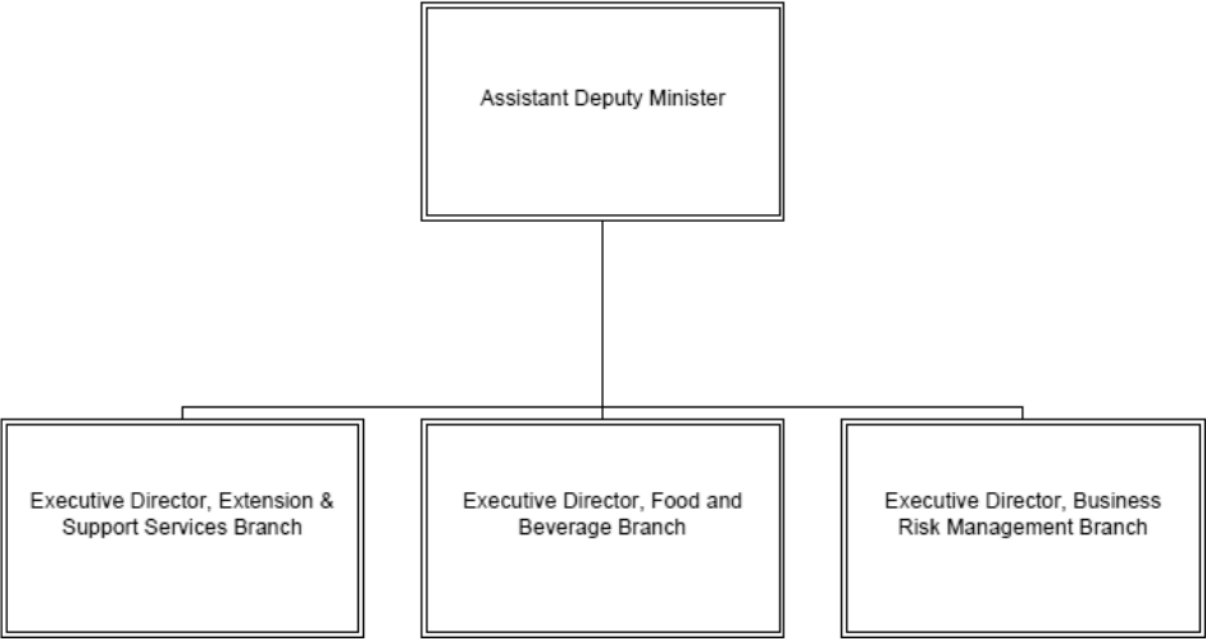
Core Business Area	2021/2022 Restated Estimates	2022/23 Estimates	2023/24 Plan	2024/25 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Agriculture Resource</b>	56,463	61,433	61,433	61,433

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs):197

Related Legislation:

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 30 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the Ministry. A complete list of legislation for which the Ministry is responsible is available online: <https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/amr/amr/1135179498>

Organizational Chart:



## CORE BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREAS / BUSINESS PROCESSES

## B.C. Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB)

Executive Director: Kirsten Pedersen

The BCFIRB is an independent administrative tribunal that operates at arm's length from government. BCFIRB's statutory mandates include hearing appeals and complaints as well as supervising B.C.'s regulated agricultural commodity boards and commissions.

BCFIRB's responsibilities include:

- General supervision of B.C.'s agricultural commodity boards;
- Being a signatory to formal federal-provincial cooperation agreements in regulated marketing;
- Conducting farm practices studies;
- Hearing appeals of agricultural commodity board decisions;
- Hearing appeals related to certain BCSPCA animal custody decisions; and
- Hearing farm practices complaints from persons disturbed by odour, noise, dust or other disturbances arising from agriculture or certain aquaculture operations.

Where it is suitable, BCFIRB promotes early dispute resolution through mediation, facilitation or other processes. BCFIRB decisions are final and conclusive but may be judicially reviewed by, or appealed to, the Supreme Court of British Columbia. BCFIRB processes and procedures can be reviewed by B.C.'s Office of the Ombudsperson, providing an additional layer of accountability.

Budget:

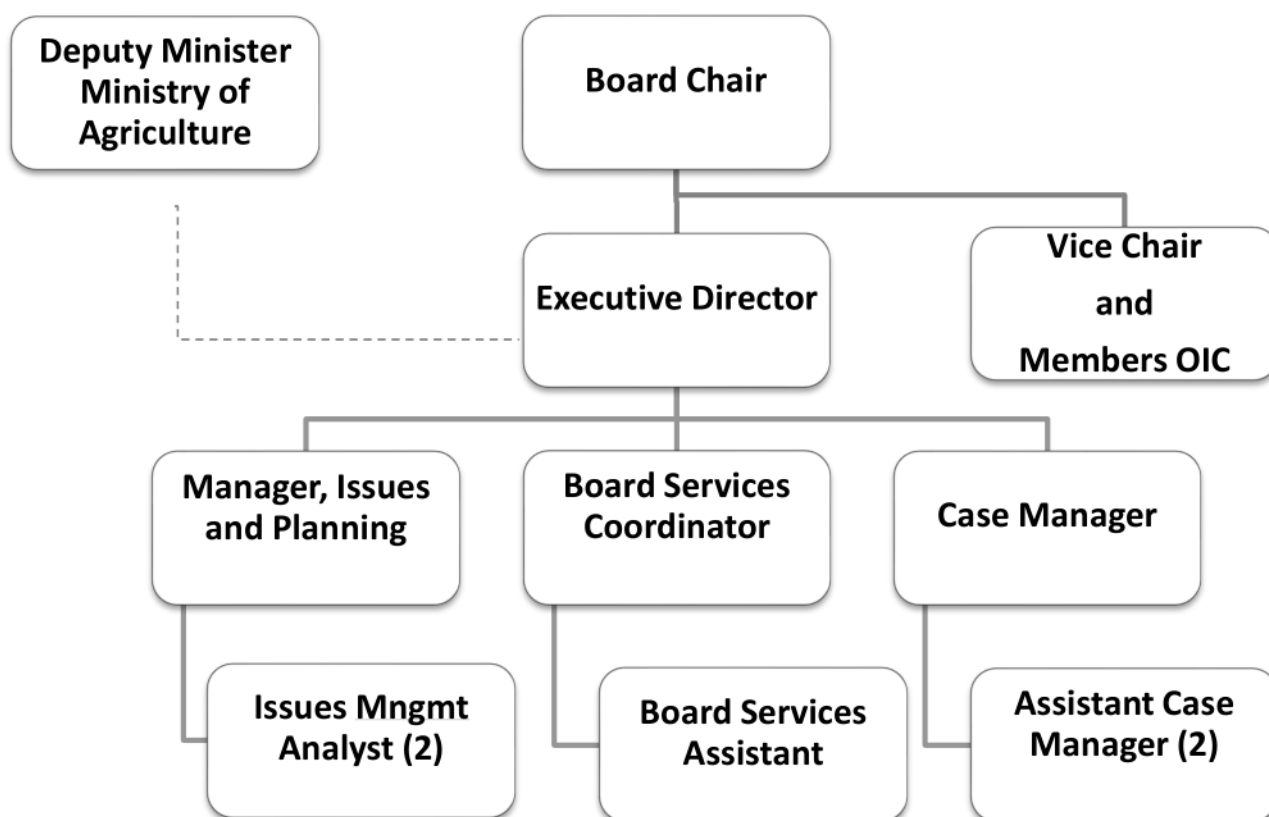
Core Business Area	2022/2023	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Restated Estimates	Estimates	Plan	Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>B.C. Farm Industry Review Board</b>	Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information			

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs): 8

Related Legislation:

- The Natural Products Marketing (B.C.) Act
- The Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act
- The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act
- The Administrative Tribunals Act

Organizational Chart:





## CORE BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREAS / BUSINESS PROCESSES

## Corporate Services for the Natural Resource Ministries

ADM Responsible: Sonja Martins (FOR and LWRS) and Ranbir Parmar (AF, EMLI, ENV and MIRR)

Corporate Services for the Natural Resource Ministries (CSNR) is a corporate services organization providing services for approximately 7,000 employees in the natural resource ministries in over 100 locations throughout the province. CSNR serves the following ministries:

- Agriculture and Food (AF)
- Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI)
- Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV)
- Forests (FOR)
- Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR)
- Land, Water and Resource Stewardship (LWRS)

## CSNR Services:

## Facilities, Fleet &amp; Corporate Security

- Facilities – Workspace accommodation, project and issue management for all six natural resource ministries
- Fleet and Assets – Planning, analysis, reporting, maintenance and procurement for AF, ENV, FOR and LWRS
- Risk and Corporate Security – Planning, response and recovery assistance for business disruptions and physical security issues for all six natural resource ministries

## Financial Services

- Budgeting, forecasting and financial analysis/reporting and support; expenditure, revenue management and recovery processing and reporting
- Financial planning and reporting
- Financial operations
- Accounting
- Financial systems and data entry
- Financial policy, compliance and procurement

## Strategic Human Resources

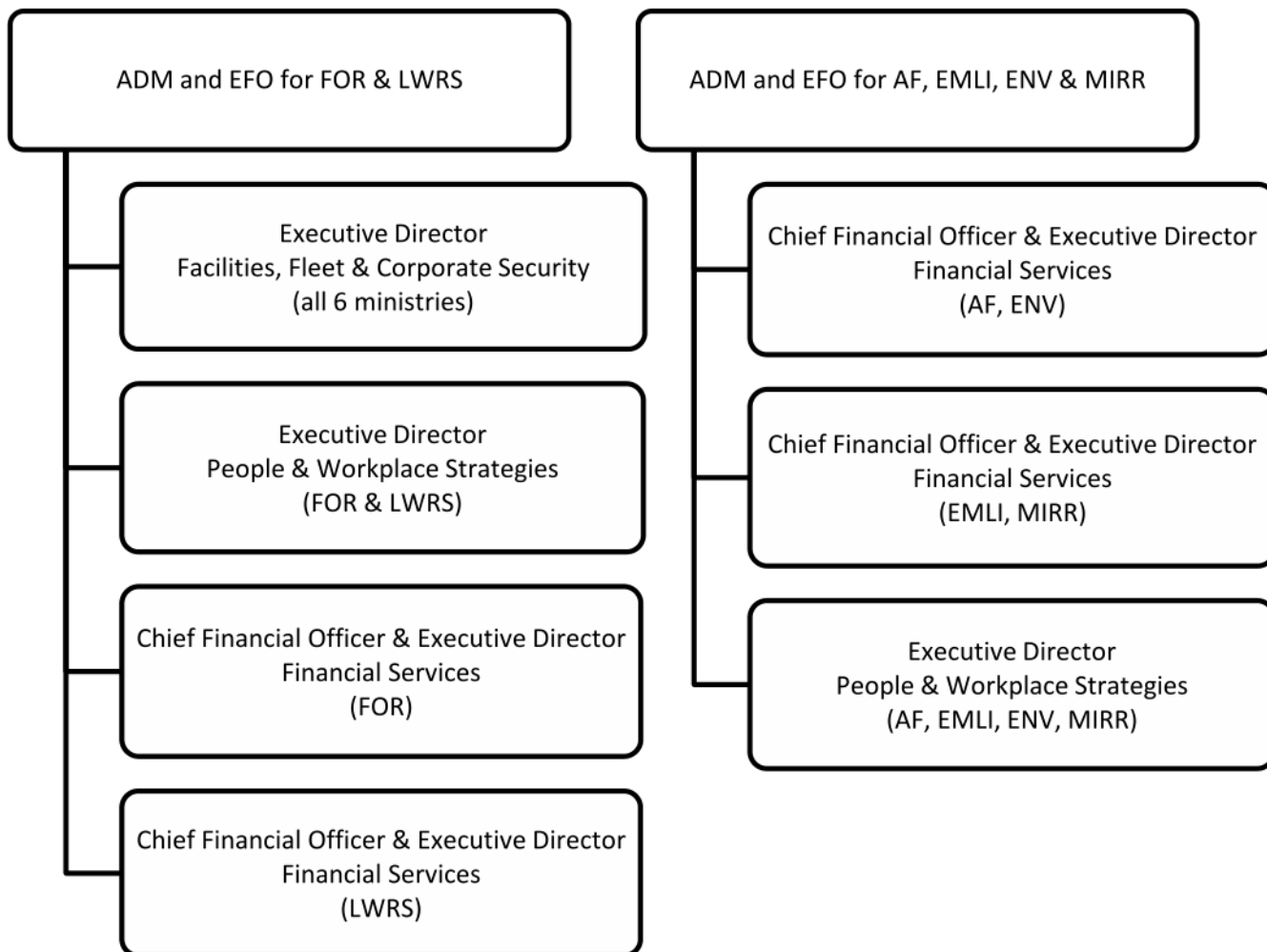
- Leadership Development
- Health & Well-being
- Change Leadership
- Workforce Planning
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Employee Engagement
- Recruitment Strategy
- Workforce Intelligence & Research
- Culture & Engagement
- Learning & Development

Budget: Government Financial Information

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs): 337 (headcount as of September 1, 2022)

Related Legislation: N/A

Organizational Chart:



## CORE BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREAS / BUSINESS PROCESSES

## Regenerative Agriculture and Climate Initiatives (RACI) Division

Executive Lead: Vacant

The Regenerative Agriculture and Climate Initiatives (RACI) Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is responsible for: focusing on innovation, commercialization and adoption of promising regenerative agriculture and agritech technologies, practices and systems, to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the agriculture, food and seafood sector; developing strategic climate adaptation and mitigation policies, programs, and initiatives to support B.C.'s agriculture sector and to align the Ministry with the Province's commitments under CleanBC and the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy; and, leadership and coordination of the Ministry's emergency management response to plant and animal health related issues as well as extreme weather events that impact the agriculture industry.

## Budget:

RACI is a new Division that was formed following the release of this year's budget. The budget for RACI has not yet been finalized.

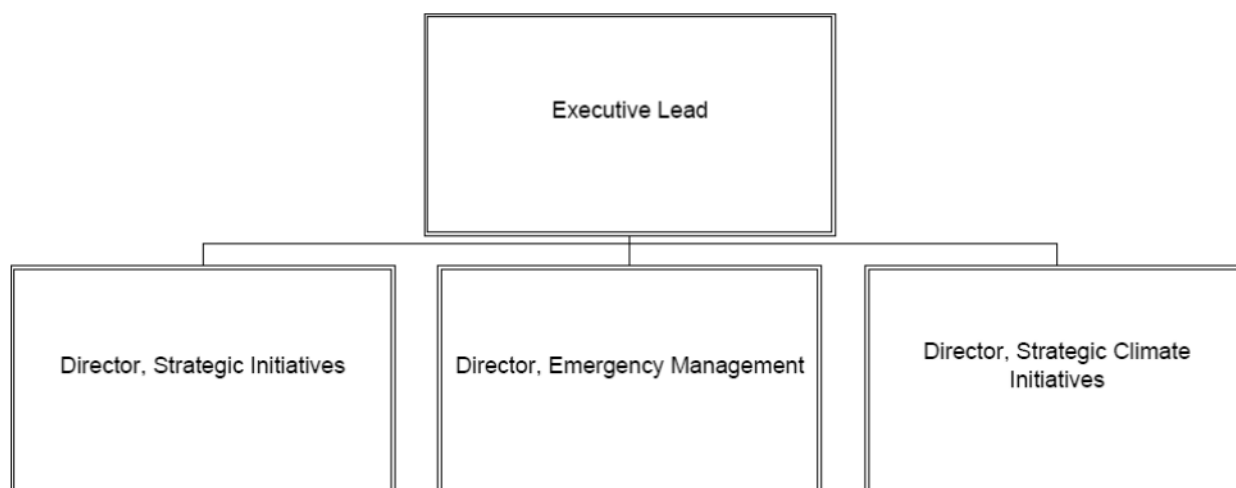
## Full Time Equivalents (FTEs):

Full time FTEs for RACI are still being counted under SPID and ARD. Once RACI's structure is finalized it will have approximately 20 FTEs.

## Related Legislation:

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## Organizational Chart:



## CORE BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREAS / BUSINESS PROCESSES

## Science, Policy and Inspection Division

ADM Responsible: Vacant

The Science, Policy and Inspection Division (SPID) is responsible for the research, policy and legislation required to build a competitive and profitable agrifood and seafood sector, as well as for maintaining compliance with federal-provincial agreements, and ensuring commodity-based food safety and plant and animal health via inspection, surveillance and diagnostic services. The Division:

- Provides surveillance, diagnostic services, and management systems including licensing and inspection to monitor and improve plant and animal health, protect public health, and for the creation and delivery of industry initiatives including research and innovation.
- Improves public health protection, consumer and retail confidence in the safety of BC meat, seafood and agrifood products, and supports producers and processors to meet demand for BC agri-food products through inspection and regulatory compliance, education and awareness, surveillance, risk assessment, and development of policy, programs and strategies to address identified risks; and
- Leads development of research, policy and legislation related to a competitive and profitable agriculture sector, leads corporate initiatives related to business transformation, and the labour program which supports temporary foreign workers and domestic seasonal workers;

SPID is comprised of three branches:

- Plant and Animal Health
- Food Safety Inspection
- Corporate Policy and Priorities

Budget:

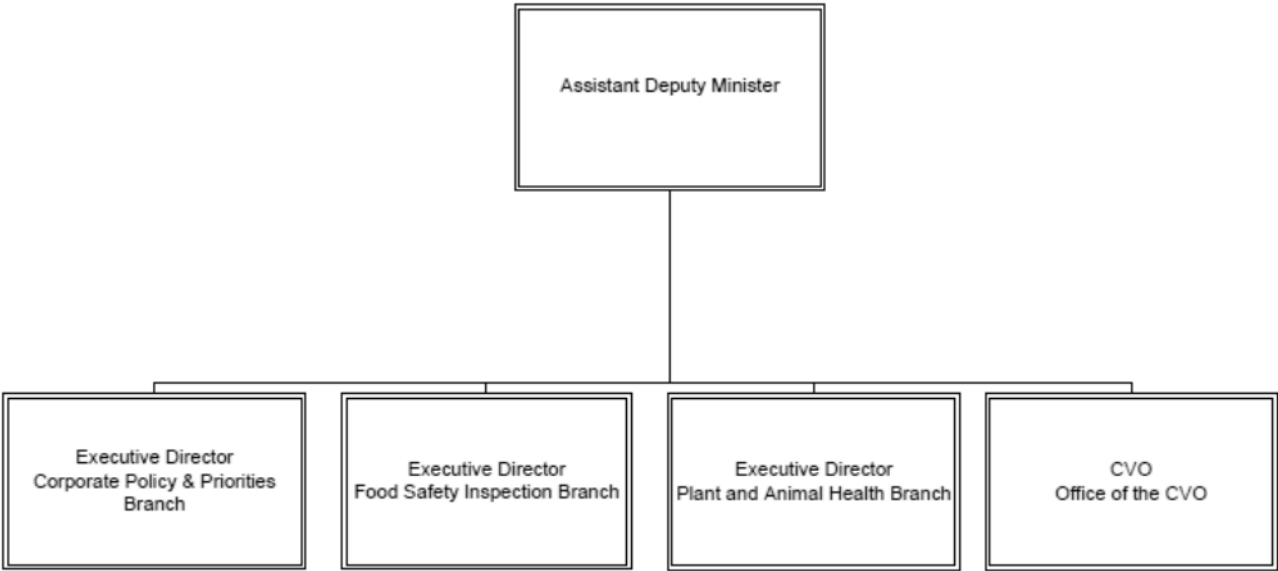
Core Business Area	2021/2022	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Restated Estimates	Estimates	Plan	Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Agriculture Science and Policy</b>	16,146	19,086	20,086	20,086

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs): 206

Related Legislation:

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 30 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the Ministry. A complete list of legislation for which the Ministry is responsible is available online: <https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/amr/amr/1135179498>

Organizational Chart:



# Appendix C

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



Peter Pokorny  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Peter Pokorny was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food (AF) on January 31, 2022.

Prior to joining AF, Peter served for three years as Associate Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Health. At Health, Peter was responsible for health system operations, including the operational response to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The balance of Peter's 15+ year career in the BC Public Service has involved senior leadership roles at the BC Oil and Gas Commission (Vice President, Operational Policy and Environment) and a wide range of Ministries, including Finance (Treasury Board Staff); Transportation and Infrastructure; Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations; and Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources.

Peter holds an Honours Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Brock University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Victoria.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



Arif Lalani  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Agriculture Resource Division  
Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Arif Lalani has been the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Agriculture Resource Division with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food since September 2015.

The Agriculture Resource Division is responsible for providing provincial and federal-provincial agricultural risk management programs and funding of programs and trusts, as well as regional sector support in business development, youth development, and innovation and technology.

Arif has a Bachelor's of Arts (Major Political Science and Minor in Economics) and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Victoria. Arif comes from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, where he was the Executive Director of Provincial Services within the Policy and Provincial Services Division.

Arif has a proven track-record of success in managing very complex, diverse and politically sensitive programs. This has earned Arif the distinction, through leadership reviews, of being an executive that possesses credibility, seeks collaboration and builds strong relationships. Arif's approach to strategic leadership is focused on excellent ethics and integrity, pragmatism in approaching change management, and maintaining a mindset geared to achieving results.

### Personal Information



## EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



Ranbir Parmar  
Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer  
Assistant Deputy Minister's Office  
Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship

Ranbir Parmar is one of the Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADM) for Corporate Services for the Natural Resource Ministries (CSNR) and the Executive Financial Officer (EFO) for the Ministries of Agriculture and Food; Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation; Environment and Climate Change Strategy; and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. He is also the lead for the Financial Services Branch and the People and Workplace Strategies Branch supporting those ministries.

Ranbir started his career in the public service in 1994 with the Ministry of Transportation. He has also worked in a variety of roles for the Ministries of Small Business and Revenue, Finance, and Ministry of Forests and Range (MoFR). As the Chief Financial Officer in MoFR his responsibilities included financial planning and reporting, financial operations and systems, and procurement and supply services for the ministry. Ranbir was permanently appointed as the ADM and EFO on April 1, 2022, has a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Finance from the University of British Columbia, and is a Chartered Professional Accountant, CGA.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



Kim Grout  
Chief Executive Officer  
Agricultural Land Commission

Kim Grout was appointed as chief executive officer (CEO) of the Agricultural Land Commission in 2015. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture from the University of British Columbia, as well as professional certification as a registered professional agrologist and a registered professional planner.

Kim is a leader with extensive experience in local government operations. Prior to her appointment, she served the City of Pitt Meadows for 11 years, in roles including chief administrative officer (CAO), deputy CAO and director of operations and development service. She has also worked for the cities of Maple Ridge and Abbotsford.

In addition to her degree in agriculture, Kim has completed training in strategic management at the UBC Sauder school of business, and municipal administrative training institute programs at Capilano University.

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER BIOGRAPHY



Kirsten Pedersen  
Executive Director  
BC Farm Industry Review Board

Kirsten joined the BC Farm Industry Review Board (BCFIRB) as the Executive Director in June 2016. Kirsten holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Victoria and has been with the BC Public Service since 1990, having over 30 years of experience in areas including policy and legislation, operations and regulatory oversight and board governance. Kirsten spent over twenty years with the Ministry of Transportation in different roles, including Executive Director of both the South Coast and Northern Regions, and as the Executive Director of Policy and Legislation. Kirsten has worked with a broad range of agencies and stakeholders across many different industries, sectors and levels of government.

Personal Information

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# Appendix D

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- The Minister of Agriculture and Food's 2017 mandate letter included the commitment to revitalize the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

### Background:

- The ALR is a provincial land use zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use, farming is encouraged, and non-agricultural uses are carefully managed.
- Pressure on farmland has continued to grow, driving the cost of land out of reach for many farmers and causing valuable farmland to be impacted by residential, non-farm use, industrial development, and illegal dumping of construction waste.
- In 2017, a mandate letter commitment for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the ministry) was to revitalize the ALR and ALC.
- As part of the mandate, in January 2018, the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Minister) appointed an independent Minister's Advisory Committee (MAC) to lead stakeholder engagements and public consultation on how to revitalize the ALR and ALC.
- On July 31, 2018, the MAC released an Interim Committee Report to the Minister on the revitalization of the ALR and ALC which contained recommendations for legislative change.
- On November 27, 2018, Bill 52 (the *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2018*) was passed, based on recommendations made in the Interim Committee Report.
  - There were three key changes in Bill 52:
    - Restricting the size of principal residences,
    - Reunifying the ALR into one zone, and,
    - Restricting unauthorized fill placement in the ALR.
- On February 22, 2019, the Bill 52 changes were brought into force.
- On April 30, 2019, the MAC released the Final Committee Report to the Minister of Agriculture: Recommendations for Revitalization.
- On May 30, 2019, Bill 15 (the *Agricultural Land Commission Amendment Act, 2019*) was passed and later came into force. The Bill strengthened ALC governance and independence, and further protected ALR land for farmers and ranchers.
- In response to Bill 52 changes, some ALR landowners felt the changes were too restrictive and asked the government to consider increasing additional residence options in the ALR.
- During the period of September 19 to November 15, 2019, the ministry held public engagement and feedback was summarized in the "Supporting B.C. Farmers 'What We Heard' Report." The need for more residential flexibility was a key theme in the report.
- On January 27, 2020, the "Policy Intentions Paper: Residential Flexibility in the ALR" was released for public engagement, and feedback resulted in new rules under the Agricultural Land Reserve Use Regulation (ALRUR) increasing residential flexibility in the ALR.
- On December 31, 2021, new rules under the ALRUR came into effect allowing for increased residential flexibility through additional residence options. The new rules permitted ALR landowners to have two residences per parcel based on specific circumstances related to parcel size.

**Issue/Opportunity:**

- There were 32 MAC recommendations, and not all were implemented. The reasons for not implementing, or only partially implementing, the remaining recommendations include:
  - There are legislative amendments of non-ministry legislation that would be needed, and/or,
  - There is a need for further analysis that could not be accomplished due to other priorities.
- The ministry has not publicly committed to implementing all the recommendations from the MAC report.
- Recommendation 25 resulted in the formation of the Deputy Minister Oil and Gas Task Force, tasked with investigating the interaction of oil and gas development and agriculture in B.C.'s Northeast ALR. The Task Force is ongoing and will determine if any further work is necessary.
- The ALC identified Recommendation 14 (Maximum Cumulative Footprint) as a priority for further policy work; however, progress on the file was paused due to landslide/flooding/Avian Influenza emergency events.
- Recommendation 14 proposes to provide flexibility for ALR landowners while preserving farmland by allowing a maximum cumulative footprint for farm related industrial and non-farm uses on the ALR, without ALC approval, if these are done within the allowed footprint.
- Active work on Recommendation 14 is hindered by incomplete and out-of-date land use data to support evidence-based decision making.
- Government's Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI) documents and determine how agricultural land is being used around the province.
- The ALUI is incomplete (about 80% of the province has been surveyed) and most of it is out-of-date that it is of limited use.
- An update/completion of the ALUI is necessary to ensure decision makers have reliable land use data to make evidence-based decisions for the ALR.
- The need for an up-to-date ALUI is especially true for the Recommendation 14 project because determining a maximum cumulative footprint requires up-to-date data to ensure the footprint provides sufficient area for development (and is not already covered by infrastructure) but also isn't so large that an excess of farmland is open for development.
- Appendix provides information on the project to accelerate an update/completion of the ALUI.
- Once ALUI project is complete, more rapid progress on the Recommendation 14 project can occur.

## **Appendix: Major Corporate Issues Note: Agricultural Land Use Inventories**

### **Issue:**

- There is a lack of comprehensive land use data to inform Provincial policies and decision making on the ALR. The ministry is accelerating an Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI) project to address significant gaps in data.

### **Background:**

#### About the ALR:

- The ALR was established in 1973 to protect agricultural land in the province.
- The ALR is a provincial designation in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are restricted.
- The ALR protects approximately 4.6 million hectares (4.9%) of B.C.'s total land base. Ownership is roughly 50% provincial Crown and 50% private.
- ALR occurs in every region of the province except Stikine (an unincorporated area in northwestern B.C.). The Peace and the Cariboo regions have the most with about 48% of B.C.'s ALR, but together only contribute 7% of B.C.'s Farm Cash Receipts. In contrast, the Fraser Valley region has only 1.5% of the provincial ALR but generates approximately 39% of B.C.'s Farm Cash Receipts. Farm Cash Receipts in B.C. in 2020 were \$4.026B.
- Arable land in B.C. is extremely limited and under great pressure from competing land uses.
- Most of the land with the greatest agriculture capability is located in regions experiencing the greatest development pressures (Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, and the Okanagan).
- These land use pressures are acute. The Lower Mainland is rapidly running out of available industrial-zoned lands and housing pressures exacerbate this problem.
- Due to restrictions on use, ALR land prices are generally lower when compared to similar parcels. There are also tax advantages on ALR land. This increases pressure to use the land for other purposes (residential, industrial, non-farm uses).
- There are also broader ecosystem considerations. Agricultural activities contribute to the health of riparian ecosystems, the availability of wildlife habitat, and protection of provincial biodiversity.
- These same attributes can help to mitigate risks from a changing climate. For example, agricultural lands can act as sinks to absorb flood water, serve as a forest/urban interface buffers during wildfires, and have the potential to support carbon mitigation efforts through soil carbon sequestration.
- There is also increasing awareness and opportunity around the role of agriculture in supporting local economies, protecting food supply, and building resilient local/regional food systems.

#### About Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUIs):

- In 2007, the ministry began ALUIs to determine and document how agricultural land is being used around the province.
- Beyond "current state" analysis, ALUIs allow for the measurement of farmland utilization and non-agricultural uses in the ALR and changes in land use patterns and practices over time.
- However, resourcing of the ALUI work within the ministry has come in stops and starts since 2007. As a result, the ALUI data is incomplete and most of it is very dated.
- Baseline ALUIs have been completed for about 80 percent of the ALR, but most is so old it is of limited use. Some regions of the province have never been surveyed.
- Only 15 percent of the ALR has been resurveyed (a baseline and a follow-up ALUI), which are important

for understanding and measuring change in how the land is used.

- The *Final Report on the Revitalization of the ALR and ALC (2018)* includes a specific recommendation to complete and maintain an agricultural land inventory for the province.

#### **Issue/Opportunity:**

- To make informed decisions, the Province needs to know how the ALR is being used: how much farming, what type of farming, how many residences, volume of value added activities, coverage of structures, types and volume of crops, etc., and the data needs to be current and available province-wide.
- There are many decision makers on the ALR, including local governments, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and numerous provincial government ministries.
- Policy and regulatory changes have the potential to fundamentally change the nature of the ALR. Without data to definitively demonstrate what is occurring on the ALR (and how things are changing), the development and implementation of such policies and regulations will not be adequately informed and may result in unintended consequences.
- ALUIs have the potential to be a powerful tool but the information must be current, comprehensive, and accessible.
- The ministry is redirecting resources to update and expand the scope of the ALUI.
- Current resources will allow for this plan to see a full provincial baseline within five years and the tools and methodologies in place to ensure this information remains up to date and accessible. This assumes an approximate \$4.5 million cost over five years, which will be cost-shared with the Federal government under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Agreement.
- Other ministries collect data on the ALR, such as ownership information, taxation data, aerial surveys, oil and gas land use data, etc. and better coordination is needed to ensure that the ministry has access to the foundational data to inform decision making on the ALR.
- The opportunity for increased cooperation and joint work has been initiated with the Natural Resource Ministries by the ministry's Deputy Minister and similar engagement will occur with other ministries.
- Once there is foundational land use data, the ministry can link to other data sources, such as ownership, production values, environmental data, and First Nations interests, which can inform a broad array of ministry and government priorities.

#### **Next Steps:**

- In early 2022, this data gap was identified as a significant barrier to good decision making in the ALR.
- In May 2022, resources and staff were redirected to accelerate the ALUI update for Metro Vancouver to ensure the entire Metro Vancouver region could be surveyed in summer 2022.
- Resources have been redirected to initiate a "desktop" ALUI update for the Fraser Valley over winter 2022 with the field season to be completed in summer 2023.
- Identifying the scale and scope of food processing occurring in B.C. and within the ALR is a priority related to the provincial agritech mandate and requires specific analysis of existing and new data sources. The ministry is currently updating its data on food processing on the ALR, which will be integrated with updated ALUI data in fall 2023 to inform policy considerations for food processing on the ALR.



## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Animal Health Centre and Plant Health Laboratory

### Background:

#### Animal Health Centre (AHC)

- The AHC is the provincial veterinary diagnostic laboratory that provides veterinary laboratory diagnostic services to safeguard the health of all animals in B.C., protect the agricultural economy and shield the public against zoonoses (diseases transmissible from animals to humans).
- The AHC is the only accredited full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory in B.C., including tests that are only offered at this location country wide. It offers 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 range of diagnostic testing includes bacteriology, histopathology, molecular diagnostics, necropsy, serology, electron microscopy and virology.
- The AHC is the only laboratory in B.C. that is authorized and certified by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to test for Foreign Animal Diseases (FAD) such as Avian Influenza and African Swine Fever.
- As part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's response to the Spring/Summer Avian Influenza outbreak in B.C., the AHC tested about 11,000 samples submitted by the CFIA between May and August 2022.
- The AHC receives about 8-10,000 diagnostic case submissions (for each submission several tests can be performed, therefore the number of cases does not correlate or reflect to the number of 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 supports the *Animal Health Act* and the Chief Veterinarian in managing disease outbreaks, surveillance, and animal welfare issues.
- Tests and services offered by the AHC are crucial for detection and rapid containment of animal diseases in order to protect animal and human health and minimize negative economic impact. Over the past 10 years the AHC has seen a 10-fold increase in submissions early.

#### Plant Health Laboratory (PHL)

- The Plant Health Laboratory (PHL) serves and protects the crop industry, offers plant and pest surveillance, and supports the bioeconomy in B.C. The PHL (est. 1967) provides plant health diagnostic services on samples submitted to the laboratory, monitors plant health trends, and delivers plant health programs for all commercial crops and urban agriculture plants grown in B.C.
- The PHL works to prevent plant health emergencies and epidemics. The laboratory functions support the *Plant Protection Act* and facilitates early detection of plant diseases. Uncontrolled plant diseases can result in less food, higher food prices or food of poor quality.
- Crop damage from pests such as insects, fungi, bacteria and viruses reduce crop quality and yield, increase the cost of production, and lower economic viability.

- Plant samples submitted to the laboratory include cannabis, grapes, grains, oilseed, tree fruits, berries, greenhouse and field vegetables and landscape plants, totaling hundreds of horticultural crops, each with its own unique pest associations.
- In 2021, the laboratory received approximately 1,200 plant samples from 250 clients (growers, crop consultants and Ministry staff) for disease diagnosis. Targeted disease and pest surveys constitute another 200-300 samples each year (e.g., little cherry virus, club root).
- The laboratory typically conducts approximately 4,000 tests each year. In 2021, the lab diagnosed diseases on approximately 150 different crops, with cannabis (32 percent of all samples) and blueberry (12 percent of all samples) being most frequently submitted.
- The PHL uses a wide range of methods and procedures to make diagnoses, including microscopic examination, culturing, conventional and real-time PCR, sequencing, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs), insect identifications, Biolog testing, ImmunoStrip testing, and electron microscopy.
- Over the past 10 years the PLH has seen an 8-fold increase in submissions early and in 2021 submissions were up 52% compared to 2020.

#### **Issue/Opportunity:**

- The atmospheric river event on November 15, 2021, led to widespread flooding in the Sumas Prairie area, including the plant and animal health laboratories and office building.
- Mechanical systems that support the office building, Containment level 2 (CL2), Containment level 3 (CL3) and the incinerator used for the safe disposal of hazardous animal waste sustained extensive damage rendering the AHC and the PHL non-operational for approximately 4 months.
- Extensive repair work of office areas, CL2 laboratory, FAD laboratory and the Plant Health Laboratory was completed in March 2022.
- Repair of the incinerator was completed in October 2022 and depending on testing under smaller loads (birds) for the next two weeks it is expected that all necropsies services will be resumed.
- The majority of the AHC services have been resumed since March 2022.
- Repair work of the CL3 laboratory that provides additional capacity for FAD testing is ongoing and expected to be completed in December.
- The PHL re-opened to clients on April 11, 2022 and resumed full services in plant disease diagnostics and disease surveillance.
- Annual revenue generated from both laboratories is approximately \$700K.
- Relocation and flood mitigation infrastructure are being contemplated for the AHC and PHL.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Overview of main animal diseases (Avian Influenza and African Swine Fever) served by the Animal Health Center (AHC) and the Office of the Chief Veterinarian (OCV).

### Background:

#### Avian Influenza (AI)

- Avian influenza, commonly known as "bird flu", is a contagious viral infection that can affect several species of food producing birds as well as pet birds and wild birds. AI can be classified into 2 categories: low pathogenicity and high pathogenicity viruses, based on the severity of the illness caused in birds.
- AI can be transmitted directly from bird to bird through secretions and feces, and indirectly through human movement, contaminated feed, water, and equipment.
- The Canadian Food inspection Agency (CFIA) is the lead agency responsible for control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Poultry in Canada
- Since Spring 2022, there is an ongoing national outbreak of HPAI caused by the H5N1 strain.
- Since April 14, 2022, the CFIA confirmed the presence of the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of AI in both backyard flocks and commercial poultry farms (Fraser Valley, B.C, Interior and Vancouver Island). The last confirmed case was in a turkey commercial farm in Aldergrove on October 15, however on Oct 20 the AHC detected one more commercial turkey farm positive for H5 AI (this detection is being confirmed by the CFIA).
- Once the CFIA confirms HPAI in poultry, they engage in measures to stamp out disease that include quarantine, depopulation and disposal of the infected flock.
- The CFIA establishes a primary control zone (PCZ) around any infected commercial farm to prevent the spread of disease and on a case-by-case basis for non-commercial farms.
- B.C. has a wild bird surveillance program for AI that collects samples from birds (found dead, hunted, in wildlife rehab centres) and sediment samples from wetlands the birds gather on. The surveillance is a partnership between different federal and provincial agencies and the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative.
- Between October 2021 and August 2022, 87 dead wild birds have tested positive for AI in various regions of B.C. This includes 5 waterfowl species (geese, ducks etc.) and 11 non-waterfowl species (mostly bald eagles). 2 mammal species (red fox and striped skunk) have also tested positive during this period. Research undertaken by the ministry since 2015 shows that the risk of AI in B.C. is highest during fall migration of wild birds.
- B.C. poultry farms practice on-farm biosecurity measures including controlled or restricted access to areas of the farm, increased cleaning, disinfection, and sanitization of all things (e.g., clothing and footwear) entering the controlled areas where the flocks are housed.
- Under the *Animal Health Act*, the Chief Veterinarian has the authority to issue orders provincewide to prevent the risk of spread of reportable diseases including avian influenza.
- The AHC lab has been active since September 2022 and provides sick bird and pre-movement surveillance testing to support the poultry industry preparation for fall 2022 testing.
- There are over 550 poultry farms in the province with about 80% of those located in the Fraser Valley.

#### African Swine Fever (ASF)

- 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, however other forms result in less obvious illness, creating risk that the virus might spread undetected.
- There are no approved vaccines or treatments for ASF. Prevention is reliant on biosecurity.
- ASF has not been detected in Canada, however outbreaks in other parts of the world and international movement of people and goods increases the risk that the disease could arrive in Canada.

- Most of Canada's pig products are exported. If ASF is introduced in any pig or barn in Canada, it is anticipated that borders will close to export, and trade of live pigs and pork products will stop. This may result in welfare culling of healthy animals to address lack of barn space and shortages of.
- Over the past two years, there has been a strong focus on ASF preparedness and planning activities in Canada, supported and managed by the ASF Executive Management Board, AAFC, the CFIA, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the provinces Chief Veterinarians.
- Due to the high number of pigs moving between the four Western provinces, the provinces have agreed to coordinate a 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, and the AHC is prepared to provide testing if needed.
- The Ministry has invested in and worked with industry to develop biosecurity infrastructure; training on farms and at abattoirs; on-line resource materials and workshops; and a B.C. Pork Market Interruption Response Plan (included the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Agriculture and Foods, Agri-food Canada, and CFIA).
- 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.

#### **Issue/Opportunity:**

##### Avian Influenza

- The September 12, 2022 detection of H5 influenza marks the beginning of the second AI emergency response in 2022.
- The AHC is still rebuilding from the November 2021 atmospheric river event, and without the CL3 lab, the capacity to provide testing for AI and maintain normal operations is limited. If the influx of AI samples increases, other services will need to be stopped. At the moment, the lab can provide approximately 300 PCR tests for AI daily and maintain normal operations.
- The AHC does not have the capacity to perform wild bird testing until the CL3 lab is operational. Therefore wild bird submissions are being sub-contracted to the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) to be tested. The AHC has very limited capacity to perform other genomic analyses (e.g., sequencing), and it is an area the Centre must invest in the near future. Sequencing at the moment is also being subcontracted to the BCCDC.
- With the restoration of the incinerator the lab can now resume normal necropsies services which is critical for normal surveillance and outbreak response. Another critical aspect of outbreak response is to complete work on the Containment level 3 (CL3) lab.

##### African Swine Fever

- A molecular test (PCR) from the National CFIA lab has been deployed to provincial labs, and the AHC is fully accredited. The AHC is currently testing pigs for ASF as part of routine national risk-based surveillance (CanSpotASF).

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) has initiated an assessment of the Province's animal welfare framework.

### Background:

- B.C.'s animal welfare legislative framework includes the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (PCAA), the *Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act* (NPMA), and the *Animal Health Act* (AHA).
- The PCAA, the primary source of protection for farm animals in B.C., requires anyone responsible for an animal to not cause the animal distress and to protect it from circumstances that are likely to cause it distress.
- The PCAA authorizes the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA) to respond to animals in distress.
- There have been several cases of farm animals in distress publicly reported by the BC SPCA. These include:
  - Beef cattle on Vancouver Island in January 2022,
  - Dairy cattle at Cedar Valley Farm in October 2021, and
  - Chickens at Elite Farm services Ltd. in September 2021.
- In June 2022, the Deputy Minister (DM) of Agriculture and Food directed Ministry staff to initiate an assessment of B.C.'s farmed animal welfare framework.

### Issue/Opportunity:

- The Ministry is currently undertaking an assessment of B.C.'s farmed animal welfare framework.
- As part of this assessment, Ministry staff will be reaching out to experts in industry, academia and veterinarian care, Indigenous partners, enforcement agencies, and industry groups to gather information to better understand the strengths and challenges of the existing farmed animal welfare framework.
- Ministry staff will be completing a comprehensive background document.

Advice/Recommendations

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- The development of the aquaculture industry in British Columbia (B.C.) is full of challenges and growth opportunities. First Nations have significant interests in aquaculture in B.C. as they have been taking part in shellfish farming since time immemorial and are a large component of the modern workforce in both the finfish and shellfish aquaculture industries.

### Background:

- Aquaculture Production Statistics from 2020:
  - In 2020 the total wholesale of all B.C. seafood was \$1.6B.
  - Aquaculture farmers produced 36 percent of seafood in B.C. at 100,310MT landed volume and accounted for 71 percent of the landed value at \$677M and 51 percent of the wholesale value at \$0.9B. 91 percent of B.C. aquaculture wholesale value comes from farmed Atlantic salmon (contributing 46 percent or \$750M of all B.C. seafood). Farmed Pacific salmon contributed \$39M. Farmed oysters are the next highest contributor to the total wholesale value of aquaculture products at \$19.7M. The rest of the wholesale value is made up of clams, geoducks, mussels, and other invertebrates. There is also a small wholesale value contribution that comes from kelp farming and other seafood produced in land-based re-circulating aquaculture facilities.
  - There are 86 marine finfish farm sites in B.C. with 50-70 in active operation at any given time. Seven companies own these farms, but the three main players are: Greig Seafood, MOWI Canada West, and Cermaq.
  - Marine shellfish are produced at approximately 484 sites by 300 companies and are low-tech operations in comparison to their finfish counterparts.
  - There are 86 land-based sites for various fresh-water species with 29 farms contributing about \$12M or 1.7 percent of the aquaculture landed value. 51 of these sites are dedicated to the production of fish for re-stocking purposes and six are for U-Catch purposes.
  - Details are not yet available for marine plant production, but this field has garnered significant production interest for start-up companies and with the coastal First Nations.
  - There are approximately 1,650 direct FTEs in B.C.'s aquaculture sector. There are 3,102 direct FTEs in the processing sector for both culture and wild caught seafood.
  - First Nations are active participants in the salmon aquaculture sector with 78 percent of production coming from Traditional Territories. 28 First Nations have 20 Partnership Agreements with B.C.'s major salmon producers. An estimated 30 percent of farm and 60 percent processing plant workers are Indigenous as the sector is a major employer in remote coastal communities.
- As a result of COVID-19, the industry has seen significant issues with the supply chain, increased operating costs, and labor shortages.
- In 2020, DFO announced a decision to cancel licenses for net-pen salmon farming found in the Discovery Island area and transition the entire salmon farming industry in B.C. by creating a regulatory climate to incent adoption of alternative production technology with the goal of progressively minimizing or ending interactions between cultured and wild salmon. A significant part of the transition framework involves consultation with First Nations.
- The regulatory framework for the sector is very complex and involves licensing and permitting from several federal and provincial agencies as well as consultation policy requirements resulting in long review times and delays. Investment in the industry is impacted by the uncertainty of these delays coupled with the regulatory uncertainty around the Transition Plan.

## Issue/Opportunity:

- The Transition Plan for net-pen salmon farming
  - In 2018, the Province issued a revised *Land Act* policy for issuing crown land tenures for salmon farms requiring two new conditions that would take effect in June 2022:
    1. Tenure holders must satisfy DFO that their proposed operation would not adversely affect wild salmon or their habitat.
    2. Tenure holders must demonstrate that they had agreements with the First Nation on whose territory they proposed to operate.
  - In August 2022, DFO issued a framework for the use of alternative technologies that will show a progressive reduction in the interactions between wild salmon and farmed salmon. The provincial government is working collaboratively with DFO to support the industry in this transition and in the innovation for the success of these technologies, notably:
    - Ministry of Forests: crown land tenures
    - Ministry of Land Water and Resource Stewardship: policy
    - Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy: water use, waste discharge
    - Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF): sector development, innovation, extension
  - The uncertain regulatory environment for industry poses a challenge to the attraction of outside investors and industry growth but there is opportunity for development and adoption of new technology to meet these challenges.
- Opportunities for the First Nations
  - Given the heavy involvement of First Nations in the aquaculture and seafood processing industries, there is significant opportunity for aquaculture enterprise as an economic development opportunity for coastal First Nations communities.
  - Although there are regulatory challenges and delays to getting marine plant farming operations off the ground, there is increasing interest from First Nations and British Columbians in the emerging seaweed farming sector.
- Seafood processing
  - One of the mandate commitments for AF is to “...support B.C.’s seafood producers and processors by promoting local innovation to ensure local processing of local seafood”. To address this mandate, AF has issued a request for proposals to assess the capacity, needs and gaps and make recommendation to address B.C. seafood processing sector resiliency.
- Climate Change, Ocean Acidification, Hypoxia, and extreme weather events.
  - Seafood harvesters in the province have been affected by climate change and the past year’s extreme weather climate events. Oyster harvesters suffered massive stock losses due to the 2021 heat dome event. The flooding in the Fraser basin severely damaged two land-based fish farms located on the Sumas Plain.
  - Concurrently, through funds allocated to the Climate Action Secretariate, AF has taken the lead on the development of the BC Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Action plan, as part the Province’s CleanBC initiatives. The plan, which has been endorsed by the United Nations’ Ocean Decade initiative, is expected to be complete by the end of the year.
- Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic
  - Following significant loss of sales to the service sector, the primary market for B.C. seafood and in particular aquaculture products, the market for B.C. seafood products is now booming and presents an opportunity for all aquaculture and seafood processing sectors to grow into successful industries using product development and technology innovation.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- National agricultural Business Risk Management program parameters are in the final stages of renegotiation within the next multilateral framework agreement.

### Background:

- Business Risk Management (BRM) programs (see Appendix 1 Program Descriptions) play a critical part in providing tools for farmers to manage both production and financial risks and are essential to encourage and foster continued investment in the sector.
- The parameters for these programs are set out in five-year Federal/Provincial/Territorial framework agreements. The current Canadian Agriculture Partnership agreement expires March 31, 2023. It is being replaced with the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (SCAP) agreement.
- British Columbia (B.C.) is an active participant in agreement negotiations around BRM programs and advocates for parameters which meet B.C. policy objectives and meet the needs of our provinces farmers.
- There have been two key areas of negotiation:
  - Utilization of BRM to support national climate initiatives.
  - Improvements to the AgriStability program.
- While B.C. strongly supports national climate objectives negotiating feasible and effective linkages to BRM programs has been challenging. Compromises have been reached; however, farmer reaction is expected to be somewhat negative.
- The coverage provided by AgriStability is being modestly improved under SCAP.
- Jurisdictions are continuing to collaborate on redesigning administrative processes to make the program timelier and more predictable. Redesign will continue well into 2023. Industry reaction is positive to date.
- Key producer concerns around AgriStability are being improved under SCAP.
- B.C. regularly consults with industry leaders through its Risk Management Advisory Committee, which is co-chaired by the Executive Directors of the Business Risk Management Branch and the B.C. Agriculture Council.

### Issue/Opportunity:

- B.C. will continue to be a key driver behind continuous improvement of BRM programs nationally.
- B.C. will meet industry expectations for consultation on the design of AgriStability process improvements.
- B.C. will also evaluate the potential for “made in B.C.” initiatives to further improve coverage under AgriStability by making coverage more equitable between farms.

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications



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Advice/Recommendations ; Intergovernmental Communications

## Appendix 1 Program Descriptions

	DESCRIPTION
<b>Production Insurance</b>	Stabilizes farm income by providing indemnities to insured producers who have crop losses due to uncontrollable natural perils.
<b>AgriStability</b>	A margin-based income stabilization program which protects producers against large declines in their farming income due to market conditions, production loss, and increased costs of production.
<b>Agriculture Wildlife Program</b>	Provides compensation to grain, forage, and cattle producers for non-insurable losses to crops and cattle caused by designated wildlife.
<b>Livestock Price Insurance</b>	Insurance that protects cattle and hog producers from unanticipated drops in average market prices.
<b>AgriRecovery</b>	Allows governments to provide financial assistance following catastrophic loss events; support is restricted to extraordinary costs required to return farms to full production.
<b>AgriInvest</b>	A savings account program that enables producers to have the flexibility to use the funds to cover small margin declines or for risk mitigation and other investments.
<b>Bred Heifer and Feeder Association Loan Guarantees</b>	Supports sector associations and rancher members to access capital to purchase livestock and expand their operations and increase investment in the industry.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) Climate Programming

### 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;
- Infrastructure losses and other business costs;
- Animal and human welfare issues; and
- Increased uncertainty for the sector.

Farmers and ranchers have experienced severe losses due to wildfire, flooding, extreme heat, and drought in recent years, with over \$240M in recovery funding being provided to farmers and ranchers in 2021 alone. Climate change is also impacting the provincial seafood and aquaculture sector, with threats from ocean acidification, oxygen deficiency (hypoxia), and ocean warming.

Recent natural disasters have stressed the urgency for addressing the impacts of climate change for the agriculture sector. Successful adaptation is required for industry to manage risks, realize opportunities, and ensure long-term food supply security.

AF has successfully been delivering Climate Change Adaptation Programming (CCAP) since 2007. CCAP is led by industry and provides funding for the development and implementation of collaborative regional adaptation strategies, innovation adaptation action at the farm level and industry outreach. Approximately <sup>Govern</sup> has been provided by the federal-provincial Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP) to support the CCAP programming from 2018-2023. Two subprograms include:

- Regional Adaptation Program – the development of regional specific adaptation plans and projects to support local needs (<sup>Advice/</sup>). Implementation is currently underway in Delta, Fraser Valley, Cariboo, Okanagan, Peace, Kootenay and Boundary, Bulkley-Nechako and Fraser-Fort George, and Vancouver Island.
- Farm Adaptation Innovator Program (FAIP) is investing <sup>\$Gover</sup> in twelve 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 also includes wildfire planning and preparedness workshops delivered across the province.

Between 2018 and 2023, AF will also have delivered approximately <sup>Governm</sup> of program funding through two interrelated programs, Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) Program.

- EFP (<sup>Gover</sup>) 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 (<sup>Govern</sup>) 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. AF invested a further <sup>Govern</sup> in FY 2020/21 in addition to the CAP funding, resulting in 375 on-farm BMPs being adopted in 2020/21 that helped fund improved energy efficiency and grazing management plans (i.e., mitigation), irrigation management plans and projects (i.e., adaptation), etc.

With the success of these various initiatives, AF's CCAP is acknowledged as a leading program in Canada with respect to climate adaptation programming for agriculture. The Ministry is looking to continue its success under a renewed Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership from 2023-2028.

#### **Issue/Opportunity:**

AF is delivering three new programming initiatives to support climate change in 2022/23.

#### **Regenerative Agriculture and Agri-tech Network:**

- The regenerative approach covers new and existing technologies and/or practices that aim to restore soils, water, and biodiversity health to improve overall ecosystem services and make farmland more resilient to climate change. Demonstration and outreach are strongly linked to extension services.
- Agri-tech is agriculture-focused innovative technology that can be used to transform production and support the transition to more sustainable practices and processes.
- AF is taking 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 the province as an agri-tech leader, while protecting farmland in the ALR.

AF is also working with other ministries to support the implementation of CleanBC, which will bring new funding opportunities to support climate change adaptation and mitigation in this sector. This includes the CleanBC 2030 Roadmap as well as the provincial Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS).

#### **Climate Preparedness and Adaptation (CPAS) Programming:**

- With funding of \$Gov annually, AF is supporting the agriculture sectors resiliency to extreme weather events and improving its resiliency to drought and water shortages.
- B.C. farmers and ranchers can reduce the risks from extreme weather through a new pilot program that will help improve their climate preparedness and resiliency to wildfires, flooding and extreme heat events.
- The Extreme Weather Preparedness for Agriculture program will support up to \$<sup>Advic</sup><sub>~B~</sub> in projects to help famers conduct risk assessments and infrastructure upgrades on their farms. Up to \$<sup>Advice/R</sup><sub>~</sub> will be available in each of the three different funding streams, which will cover projects for wildfires, flooding and extreme heat.
- Financial support will help B.C. farmers and ranchers better prepare for dry spells by: supporting the building or expansion of on-farm water storage facilities; upgrading dams, reservoirs and irrigation systems used for livestock and crops; and the adoption of regenerative agricultural practices.

#### **Climate Mitigation (CleanBC) Programming:**

- With funding of \$<sup>Adv</sup><sub>~</sub> annually, AF is supporting agricultural producers in increasing their adoption of beneficial management practices to help meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.
- This programming will enable B.C. producers to undertake projects that support the sequestering of carbon in soil through the establishment, enhancement, protection and management of native range and riparian habitats. Additional funding will focus on helping farmers improve the efficacy of their grain dryers, develop biogas systems, and pursue other on-farm energy efficiency projects.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Development of a comprehensive climate change strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF).

### Background:

- B.C.'s agriculture and seafood sectors are highly vulnerable to climate related risks, and successful adaptation is a critical priority. In 2021, the sector was hit by the unprecedented extreme heat dome, wildfires, drought, and extreme flooding. Climate change impacts are projected to become much greater in scale and frequency as climate change escalates, which will continue to affect food security, economic growth, and public health and wellbeing.
- The agriculture sector accounts for approximately 5 percent of B.C.'s emissions and has a small net GHG reduction potential by 2030. B.C.'s Climate Change Accountability Act commits the province to GHG emissions reduction targets of 40 percent by 2030. AF's mandate letter commits to supporting achievement of CleanBC goals.
- Carbon sequestration, GHG reductions, and climate resilience are priorities for B.C.'s new Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network (RAAN), announced in September 2021.
- The CleanBC Roadmap To 2030 is B.C.'s plan to achieve the target. B.C. Budget 2022 provided AF with \$15M over 3 years (\$5M in 2022/23) to implement strategies for the Roadmap's agriculture pathway.
- B.C.'s Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy (CPAS) was released in June 2022. B.C. Budget 2022 provided AF with \$11M over 3 years (\$3M in 2022/23) to implement CPAS.
- Through CPAS, AF is funding a new Extreme Weather Preparedness for Agriculture Program which supports farmers and ranchers with increasing their on-farm resilience to wildfire, extreme heat and flooding.
- Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership funding, AF has supported regional adaptation strategies in 8 key regions, collaborative on-farm research projects, climate action through the Beneficial Management Practices Program, and AF's work on water efficiency, drought and weather monitoring.
- Canada and B.C. have agreed that climate action will have a significantly higher priority during the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.
- With these multiple high priority initiatives, AF is developing a Climate Change Strategy and Implementation Plan to provide leadership and ensure the ministry aligns its work and investments to achieve the government's climate change goals.
- The strategy will be developed in coordination with ENV Climate Action Secretariat and other provincial agencies, with input from Indigenous peoples and key partners and stakeholders.
- Advice/Recommendations

### Issue/Opportunity:

- The strategy provides the opportunity for AF to ensure support for the Province's climate action priorities, and that funding is aligned to most effectively achieve:
  - Building the sector's ongoing adaptation to climate change;
  - Supporting the sector's transition to a low-carbon economy;
  - Mainstreaming and increasing AF's climate action capacity;
  - Investing in data and research to inform decision-making; and
  - Demonstrating results with effective & efficient monitoring & evaluation.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- British Columbia (B.C.) farmers who suffered extraordinary damages during November 2021's devastating floods have access to up to \$228M in federal-provincial government recovery support through the 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security.

### Background:

- Due to the more than 1 in 100-year atmospheric river weather events between November 14 and December 2, 2021, southwestern B.C. experienced catastrophic flooding and landslides in a region extending from the Sumas Prairie in Abbotsford to Merritt and Princeton. This resulted in the worst financial agricultural disaster in B.C.'s history. Severe losses were incurred by dairy, poultry, swine, beef, horticulture, fruit and vegetable growers, land-based fish production, as well as the food supply chain. At the peak of the event, there were over 1,100 farms under evacuation order or alert and 15,000 hectares of farmland impacted.
- There are two permanent Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) business risk management (BRM) programs that provided support for these weather-related losses and income declines:
  - AgriInsurance - provides insurance against natural hazards (weather) to reduce the financial impact of reduced crop production or asset losses. Producers must proactively purchase coverage prior to the start of the crop year.
  - AgriStability - provides support when producers experience a large income decline or expenses increase. B.C. farmers who were not enrolled in the 2021 program year can apply up until December 31, 2022.
- A formal Financial Impact Assessment initiated on November 19, 2021, conducted by AF staff and their federal counterparts, determined that the recovery costs were beyond the assistance provided by existing agricultural risk management programs (AgriInsurance and AgriStability), Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) and private insurance. Farms required additional assistance to be able to return to production, as a result, the \$228M 2021 Canada-British Columbia Flood Recovery Program for Food Security (Flood Recovery Program) was established on February 7, 2022
  - Application deadline was August 31, 2022, however, farmers have until December 31, 2023 to complete their repairs and replanting.
  - As of September 16, 2022, the Flood Recovery Program received 478 Eligible Applications and paid \$48.7M to 346 clients (678 payments); see Appendix 1 for additional payment information.
- The Flood Recovery Program provides support to 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.Farms with annual gross revenues up to \$2M receive up to 90 percent compensation for eligible expenses. Larger, more resilient farms with annual sales of over \$2M receive 70 percent compensation.
- The Program payment criteria was designed to maximize federal cost sharing under the Federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement (DFAA) and AgriRecovery agreements with Canada, for compensation paid to eligible farms.
  - The AF Business Risk Management Branch developed and administers the Program, processing applications under the eligible mechanism, either DFAA or AgriRecovery.

### Issue/Opportunity:

- Ministry staff continue to assist farmers with their applications and have completed more than 500 on farm assessments; many clients have required 2nd and 3rd visits. Upon receipt of an application each farm was called to discuss their applications and arrange farm assessment visits.
  - Additional on farm assistance will be required until December 1, 2023, as farmers continue to make decisions regarding replanting and repairs.
  - Just under \$Gove have been advanced for 'uninsurable repairs'. Much of this is for partially completed work and to assist applicants to pay deposits on equipment or retain a contractor to commence work.
  - There are some growers who are enrolled but have yet to provide their loss details. Staff and inspectors have offered to help and made in-person visits to these applicants. Generally, these clients are gathering insurance and tax information, repair, and replacement quotes; staff and contractors offer clients advice on these responsibilities.
- Most operations have returned to production: milk production, forage production for dairies, and poultry production returned to nearly full pre-flood production levels within three months of the flooding. Less than 10 percent of total blueberry production was directly impacted by the 2021 flooding and less than 200 acres remain undecided as to their recovery. Impacted pork producers continue to rebuild and repair structures with some reduced capacity. The majority of impacted Annual crop fields were cleaned up and then seeded as normal in the spring of 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. has maximized federal cost sharing available to support farm recovery, DFAA includes a British Columbia-Canada contribution of 10/90 (as opposed to AgriRecovery with a 40/60 contribution).
  - In the event of a large-scale natural disaster, the Government of Canada provides financial assistance of up to 90 percent federal cost sharing, to provincial and territorial governments through the DFAA, administered by Public Safety Canada (PS). However, the federal cost sharing is limited to payments to farms with annual gross revenues up to \$2M.
  - The AgriRecovery framework, within the Canada Agricultural Partnership (CAP) enables federal cost sharing of 60 percent for financial assistance paid to farmers, impacted by disaster, for expenses not normally incurred but necessary to resume farm operations as quickly as possible. AgriRecovery cannot duplicate coverage available under existing BRM programs.
- Given the importance of the affected region to the province's food security and economic stability, the priority for the program was to return farms to production. Farms were encouraged, but not required, to build back to a standard higher than the preflood condition. There is 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. Ministry of Forests is leading the development of the B.C. Flood Strategy 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.
- DFA is a federally cost shared through Canada's DFAA. The DFAA allows for more support for agricultural producers than the DFA is accessing under B.C.'s Compensation and Disaster Financial Assistance Regulation. This has historically caused B.C. to miss out on significant levels of federal cost sharing to assist farmers and put undue pressure on AgriRecovery. While Emergency Management BC (EMBC) has begun to align some DFA rules with Canada's cost sharing provisions, there are ongoing concerns the full extend of ag support under DFAA will not be obtained. Continued oversight is required to ensure EMBC optimizes the use of available federal monies to assist B.C. farmers in recovering from disasters.
- Further recovery resources are available through the Ministry of Agriculture, Extreme Weather Preparedness for Agriculture Program - Province of British Columbia ([gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca)), Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan – Province of British Columbia ([gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca)), and B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program - Province of British Columbia ([gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca)). Wellness supports for BC Agricultural producers are also available through AgSafe ([agsafebc.ca](http://agsafebc.ca)).

**Appendix 1: 2021 BC-Canada Flood Recovery Program for Food Security, program metrics as at September 16, 2022.**

Sector	# of Eligible Applicants	Total # of Payments	Total payments	# of Paid Clients
Nursery	21	34	7,091,727	18
Livestock	54	102	5,483,245	51
Vegetables	28	54	3,594,036	22
Blueberry	208	266	16,489,509	133
Veg/Berries	2	9	398,481	2
Bees	8	8	188,830	7
Hops	4	7	791,164	4
Dairy	59	90	6,007,858	52
Sod	3	8	3,464,128	3
Poultry	28	43	3,152,519	21
Ducks	1	1	9,238	1
Forage	52	55	1,973,270	31
Unknown/Misc	9	0	-	0
Grapes	1	1	99810	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>\$48,743,814</b>	<b>346</b>

\*Sector categorizations are assumptions

**Appendix 2**

Table 1: Comparison of eligibility, cost share, and compensation under DFAA and AgriRecovery						
	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



## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Grow B.C. is a pillar of the Grow, Feed, Buy BC mandate focused on supporting sustainable, profitable, and expanded primary production in British Columbia (B.C.)

### Background:

- Grow BC supports sustainable production by helping B.C. producers expand local food production and business growth through the provision of technical expertise, program and service delivery, and industry partnerships.
- The initial mandate focused on “building sustainable production and help BC producers expand local food production” through the following six key initiatives: Access to land for new and young farmers; Modernized extension services; Industry renewal; Revitalization of the ALR; Seafood and Aquaculture; and Climate adaptation and mitigation.
- The enhanced Grow BC mandate focuses on encouraging “greater food security and local business growth” through three sustainability pillars:
  1. Economics: Industry Renewal and Competitiveness,
  2. Environment: Sustainability,
  3. Capacity: Industry Capacity & Human Capital.

### Industry Renewal and Competitiveness:

Through Industry Competitiveness, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) 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.

- Hazelnut Replant Program: AF supported the planting of 55,000 new hazelnut trees through investments of \$0.4M in the Hazelnut Renewal Program (HRP) from 2018-2021.
- Raspberry Replant Program is intended to revitalize the raspberry industry with raspberry varieties suitable for fresh and individually quick frozen (IQF) raspberry markets. The program will help growers plant raspberry fields and go to strategic sector projects aimed at increasing sector competitiveness. In 2021, it supported 46 acres of new raspberry plantings and has committed to fund 76 acres in 2022.
- Bee Technology Transfer Program: AF invested in the Bee BC Program between 2018-2022 up to Government Financial and the budget for the Bee Tech Transfer Program is Advice/Recommendations; Government
- Aquaculture & Marine Fisheries: AF works with government partners on the Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program to support a greener fisheries and aquaculture industry

### Environmental Sustainability:

#### Nutrient Management:

- The Nutrient Management Program (NMP) provides tools, education and awareness building activities that encourage positive behavior change on the farm.

#### Planning for Agriculture:

- Support to local governments through the Strengthening Farming Program helps ensure land is available for farming
- AF invested <sup>Government</sup> in 2021-22 to increase coverage of Agriculture Land Use Inventories (ALUIs) across the province and improve usability and accessibility of ALUI data.

#### Regenerative Agriculture and Agri-tech Network:

- The regenerative approach covers new and existing technologies and/or practices that aim to restore soils, water, and biodiversity health to improve overall ecosystem services and make farmland more resilient to climate change. Demonstration and outreach is strongly linked to extension services.
- Agri-tech is agriculture-focused innovative technology that can be used to transform production and support the transition to more sustainable practices and processes.
- AF is taking 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 the

Province as an agri-tech leader, while protecting farmland in the ALR.

#### Industry Capacity & Human Capital:

##### Extension Services:

- The current regional services work collaboratively with industry organizations to provide on farm Regional Extension Demonstrations and Field Days
- Through the AGRIServiceBC client service model, regionally located staff provide knowledge and information transfer to producers, the public, local governments, NGOs and Indigenous communities.

##### Growing B.C.'s Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders:

- New Entrant Strategy focuses on three pillars, which research has found are the three most significant barriers to new farmers, to help new entrants and youth as they consider careers in and enter the sector:
  - *Access to land*: BC Land Matching Program, in partnership with the Young Agrarians, matches land holders with new farmers seeking land and support lease agreement development. The Program has supported over 231 matches to date and grew from a regional pilot to province wide with an annual contribution of \$0.390M.
  - *Access to knowledge*: Business coaching and skills training supports specific to young and new farmers
  - *Access to capital*: Small Farm Business Accelerator Pilot Program provided funding of \$0.8M to support 64 new and small farmers to access capital through cost-share for commercial farm infrastructure and equipment to improve their production capacity, efficiency and value add activities. The program evaluation indicated strong outcomes and AF is currently assessing the feedback to incorporate into planning of future programming.
- To support the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the Ministry is working with Indigenous leaders and communities to identify the priorities and actions to move forward with true and lasting reconciliation in the agriculture and food sector.
  - The Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council on Food and Agriculture (IACAF) was formed, a three-year Strategic Plan developed in 2021, and funding provided to support IACAF's work.
  - Additionally, the Indigenous Agriculture Development Program funds feasibility and business planning projects with Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs.

##### Workforce Development/Labour:

- AF provides \$0.15M in annual funding to 4-H BC to promote careers in agriculture, increase agriculture literacy, and develop B.C.'s future farmers. AF's Youth Development team also supports province-wide, school-based food and agriculture education programming, in partnership with the Ministries of Health and Education, with BC Agriculture in the Classroom and Farm to School BC.
- AF is working on the implementation of Recommendation 3 under the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan to "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."
  - Specifically, this includes support for a pilot "BC Fruit Works" program that connects B.C. employers with domestic workers looking for employment in Okanagan orchards and vineyards.

##### Issue/Opportunity:

- Develop an overarching Grow BC prioritization framework with numerous integrated plans within the framework to align Regenerative Agriculture and AgriTech, CleanBC, and AF priorities related to Labour, Emergency Management and Reconciliation.
- Within the framework further build out and support the following opportunities:
  - Increasing Extension Service Programming
  - Future funding for New Entrant Strategy Renewal and Small Farm Business Accelerator Pilot
  - Future funding for strategic Replant Programming
  - Accelerating ALUI and improving accessibility of land use information
- Leverage the Next Policy Framework under the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (S-CAP) bilateral funding agreement to further advance Grow BC mandate and priorities.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Feed BC is a pillar of the Grow, Feed and Buy BC mandate focused on increasing the use of B.C. grown and processed foods in hospitals, schools, and other government facilities.

### Background:

#### Institutional Market Opportunity

- B.C.'s non-commercial food service purchases of almost \$415 million annually represent a significant market opportunity for the sector.
- Some of B.C.'s largest public institution food buyers are in healthcare, education including K-12 and post-secondary, and corrections. Crown corporations (e.g., BC housing), independently managed but publicly owned companies (e.g., BC Ferries), private sector companies that receive public funding (e.g., private long-term care facilities), and other institutional food service interested in serving more local food to meet corporate goals also represent opportunities for B.C.'s food businesses and future Feed BC expansion.
- 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.
- Shifting government food purchases to more B.C. food provides a greater than 2:1 return on investment. Targeting government investments towards more local versus imports supports economic opportunities contributing to measurable job and GDP growth.
- Feed BC aligns with other government priorities and the strategic interests of partners through a 'whole supply chain' approach that increases demand, supply and innovation to bring B.C. food benefits to communities through jobs and economic development and diversification.
- 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 those demands. Feed BC's 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.

#### Core Feed BC strategies:

1. Increase public sector awareness and demand for B.C. food and beverage products through strategic partnerships, programs and supports including tracking, sourcing, market intelligence
2. Build capacity/support market-readiness of B.C. producers and processors through new and expanded programs, business training (e.g., food safety), 'how to' resources, and special events
3. Grow food product value chains, technology and innovation to problem-solve the food needs of government facilities with B.C. supply chain partners to match demand with B.C. products
4. Track, measure, report on and demonstrate Feed BC progress across all streams and objectives

#### Feed BC Partnerships

##### **Healthcare**

- Feed BC was first implemented in healthcare through a Ministry of Health (HLTH) partnership directing all health authorities (HAs) 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 percent).
- All regional health authorities are now formal 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) with annual results published through the B.C. Food Expenditures in Health Care reports on the Feed BC website.
- Feed BC is also helping B.C. health authorities to shift procurement practices by better emphasizing B.C./local foods in RFP processes that will create new opportunities for B.C. food businesses with Group Purchasing Organizations and others working on behalf of health authority food purchasing.

Feed BC and local food criteria and goals were a key component of the Provincial Health Services Authority foodservice contract RFP in 2022.

#### **Public Post-Secondary Institutions**

- Feed BC was initiated in post-secondary through a partnership with Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) and the Administrative Services Collaborative (ASC) representing all public PSIs. From 2019-2022, Feed BC was one of the ASC's six strategic priorities and is now a strategic priority of 20 of B.C.'s 25 PSIs. All 20 PSIs are committed to increasing B.C. food purchases toward a minimum of 30 percent and other local food opportunities on campus and in the local communities and regions they serve.
- Feed BC's progress report for PSIs in reporting Year 1 (2021/22) shows an average of 40 percent B.C. food purchasing and the range of initiatives PSIs are leading with an emphasis on food system sustainability and local economic and community development. A multi-year action plan ensures Feed BC continues to provide PSIs with practical tools to support their progress and success.

#### **K-12 Public Schools**

- With the Ministry of Education and Child Care (ECC), Feed BC is collaborating on a shared mandate to ensure students are fed for learning. The proposed framework for school food programs includes school districts working towards a minimum 30 percent B.C. food expenditures, increasing student access to local foods, and actions to support local food literacy in K-12 public schools throughout the province.

#### **Corrections**

- With the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Feed BC is exploring how regional corrections facilities can increase their B.C. food purchases through procurement processes emphasizing local foods.

Feed BC works across the agriculture and food sector and with other private sector supply chain stakeholders to support sector capacity and new opportunities. Some highlights:

- Feed BC works with supply chain partners including food service companies, purchasers and food distributors working with public institutions.
- The Feed BC Directory is an online platform of B.C. food products that meet buyer specifications
- The program provides business to business services and events to connect food businesses to institutional buyers and matchmaking through the Value Chain Innovation Service to increase practical connections and business activation between producers and processors, institutional food service, food service management companies and GPOs, and broadline distributors such as Sysco and GFS.

#### **Issue/Opportunity**

##### Key focus areas for FY 22/23:

- Feed BC expansion in K-12 with ECC; working with Corrections to bring local food emphasis to RFP processes;
- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
|  | Advice/Recommendations |
| • Advancing new supply chains through implementation of value chain development as a core feature of the Value Chain Innovation Service  |                        |
| • Supporting more Indigenous reconciliation through new research and programming further to Feed BC's cross-government work on traditional foods and Indigenous recipes  |                        |
| • Delivering two Pitch and Plate events/market readiness coaching for B.C. food businesses looking to supply into the institutional food market  |                        |
| • Supporting other market readiness programming for B.C. food businesses   |                        |
| • Developing strategic engagement and communications tools such as a Feed BC Champions newsletter to keep the wide range of Feed BC stakeholders and champions connected and sharing their work to advance local food purchasing |                        |

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Opportunity:

- Buy BC is a pillar of the Grow, Feed and Buy BC mandate focused on expanding demand and sales of local food and beverage products within British Columbia (B.C.)

### Background:

#### Key goals and strategies of Buy BC:

- Buy BC is a province-wide marketing program focused on building greater consumer awareness, and demand and sales of local agriculture, food and beverage products.
- Buy BC programming is focused on three strategic areas:
  - Increasing the availability of local products at grocery stores, markets, and food service establishments;
  - Motivating consumers to purchase locally produced or processed B.C. products over other alternatives; and,
  - Triggering consumers to purchase B.C. products when shopping and dining out across the province.
- To date, Buy BC has enabled over 750 local businesses to register for the consumer-facing logo use to promote over 3,400 B.C. products, and has funded over 300 industry-led marketing campaigns.

#### Key components of Buy BC:

- Buy BC Partnership Program provides \$2M annually in cost-share funding and access to a free Buy BC logo to support industry-led marketing campaigns.
- Province-wide Buy BC Advertising Campaigns encourages consumers to support local producers and farmers by purchasing B.C. food and beverages and ensuring that consumers are aware of the variety of local products available.
- Buy BC Retail Partnerships increase the availability, visibility and demand of B.C. food and beverages at retail.
- Buy BC: EAT DRINK LOCAL Campaigns educate consumers on the availability of local food in B.C. restaurants and food service establishments.
- Buy BC Website and Social Media enhance local food literacy and encouraging consumers to purchase local food.
- Business to Business Matchmaking Sessions increase connections between B.C. producers/processors, chefs/restaurants and retailers/distributors.
- Promotions with B.C. Fairs, Farmers' Markets and Agriculture Youth Organizations: increase local food literacy among targeted groups of B.C. consumers.

### Issue/Opportunity

#### Buy BC focus areas for FY 22/23:

- Expanding partnerships with major retailers such as Save-On Foods to enhance the ability of consumers to identify local products using Buy BC-branded in-store signage.
- Developing strategic engagement tools such as a Buy BC newsletter and logo licensee welcome kit to effectively support Buy BC partners and highlight how to best leverage the brand to be successful.
- Launching a new Buy BC Chef Ambassador to promote the importance of buying local to consumers and support ongoing farmer/chef relationship building.
- Supporting the implementation of Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food strategy by identifying indigenous-specific market development supports needed to expand local market access and sales.

- Delivering two regional Every Farmer Needs a Chef, Every Chef Needs a Farmer events to enhance connections and business opportunities between chefs and farmers located on South Vancouver Island and the Okanagan.
- Supporting the Tree Fruit Stabilization Project with Buy BC videos, advertising campaign and youth promotions.
- Conducting a Buy BC evaluation of programming to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the design and delivery of cost-share funding and other initiatives and identify areas of improvement.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) actions to move forward with the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)* and specific agriculture and food programming to increase Indigenous participation in the sector.

### Background:

- Implementing the *Declaration Act* obligates the B.C. Government and each Ministry 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.
- 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 *Declaration Act* Action Plan contains one action specifically related to AF:
  - 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 is underway:
    - IACAF was formalized in June 2021 and consists of 12 Indigenous members intended to reflect a broad range of regional perspectives from across the province.
    - IACAF developed a 3-year Strategic Plan (2021-2024) and initial activities were implemented over fiscal 21/22 and implementation will continue over 22/23 and 23/24.
- Related to alignment of laws, AFF is reviewing its legislation, starting with the ALCA for inconsistency with UNDRIP and developing its plan for engagement with Indigenous Peoples to explore options for better alignment with UNDRIP.

### Indigenous Food and Agriculture Programs

- Through AF's programs, services and ongoing relationship building, the Ministry strives to support Indigenous governments, organizations, and entrepreneurs to meet their economic self-determination goals and build capacity in the agriculture and food sector.
- AF 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.
- 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.
  - As of October 2022, there are 71 projects completed between 2018-2022. Additional projects

are underway for FY22-23, and the total over the 5-year CAP agreement is expected to be Advice/Rec .

- In addition to economic health, AF also supports community health by promoting local agriculture and food security and co-chairing the cross-government food security steering committee. Through Indigenous engagement, local food security and food sovereignty are high priorities especially related to the impacts of COVID-19 and emergency climate events experienced over the past two years.
- Through a partnership with the Investment Agriculture Foundation and IACAF, the Ministry is supporting the launch of a new Indigenous Food Systems and Agriculture Partnership funding program in September 2022.
  - This program was designed based on recommendations from IACAF and research on barriers and opportunities for funding Indigenous food and agriculture initiatives.

**Issue/Opportunity:**

- AF 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.
- Opportunities include:
  - Expanding funding for the ongoing operational supports for IACAF and program implementation in support of IACAF's Strategic Plan.
  - Working to address barriers to participation and consider the needs of underrepresented groups such as youth and women and strengthen relationships with Indigenous Peoples to better support sector participation which is a guiding principle for the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) with the federal government.
  - Design and implement a designated 5-year program under the new bi-lateral agreement for Indigenous food and agriculture.



**Issue:**

- Agriculture labour

**Background:**

Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs)

- B.C.'s agriculture sector relies on international TFWs to ensure harvests are picked and to meet seasonal labour needs that can't be filled locally due to lack of training, interest or low wages.
- Many jobs require specialized skills that the TFWs already have and many farms bring back the same workers each year.
- Approximately 11,000 seasonal foreign farm workers are employed in B.C. each year, almost all from Mexico, Guatemala and Jamaica, with the majority working in the Fraser Valley and Okanagan.
- To ensure TFWs worked safely on B.C. farms during the pandemic, the Province spent approximately \$47M on hotel, food and support services incurred during 14 days of each TFW's quarantine.
- 15,483 TFWs went through the program between April 2020 and March 2022 with 230 TFWs diagnosed with COVID-19. As of Feb. 28, 2022, fully vaccinated workers go straight to their farm.
- Approximately 97% of incoming TFWs for 2022 were fully vaccinated. All TFWs who arrived after March 2021 have been able to get a vaccine in B.C., with over 6,000 doses administered in 2021.
- The TFW Program ended on March 31, 2022. Since then, employers are responsible for ensuring federal quarantine requirements are met for partially vaccinated and unvaccinated TFWs arriving in Canada.
- Support for the self-isolation of TFWs who are COVID positive or symptomatic is available to farmers. The B.C. Farm Worker Safe Isolation Program reimburses employers up to a maximum of \$3,000 per farm worker, based on a 14-day isolation period, for costs associated with providing accommodation and other supports to workers who need to self-isolate. This program is funded through a \$Gov Contribution Agreement with the Public Health Agency of Canada and ends on March 31, 2023.

Domestic Farm Workers (DFWs)

- Every summer about 2,000 domestic migrant seasonal workers from other parts of Canada (mainly from Quebec) arrive in B.C. to work in agricultural jobs. Most of this work is on fruit and vine farms in the Okanagan and in Creston for the cherry harvest season.
- In response to local government concerns in 2020 that COVID-19 outbreaks could be caused by these workers, the Province provided \$422,000 in 2020 and \$652,000 in 2021 to operate municipally managed camps for workers that met COVID-19 health and safety guidelines in Loose Bay (Oliver) and Summerland.
- Funding was also provided to support COVID-19 health and safety measures for farms and orchards that offer on-site camping for workers. The Province also worked with AgSafe and Interior Health on an online course seasonal workers are required to take that outlines the rights and responsibilities of both employers and workers when it came to COVID-19 and provincial health officer rules and guidelines.
- In April 2022, the Ministry provided \$Gov in funding to support Recommendation 3 under the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan: "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."
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) is supporting a pilot program referred to as "BC Fruit Works" that connects B.C. employers with domestic workers looking for employment in Okanagan orchards and vineyards.
- BC Fruit Works is a collaboration between the BC Grape Growers' Association, the BC Cherry Association, the BC Fruit Growers' Association, and the BC Tree Fruit Cooperative, supported by AF.
- The initiative soft launched on June 16, 2022 and resulted in 1000+ promotional and advertisement messages outbound, 400+ potential branch hand engagements, 150+ branch hands signed up and 70

Producers engaged (representing farms from Creston to Armstrong).

**Issue/Opportunity:**

- AF is working with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) to leverage the Future Ready Skills Plan (FRSP) Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences  
Advice/Recommendations; Cabinet Confidences
- AF is exploring a funding opportunity through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) to remove barriers and increase supports for BC residents to access and occupy on-farm labour jobs.
- Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications
- 
- Opportunity to request dedicated funding to support the federal government's Agriculture Labour Strategy, rather than leveraging SCAP funding (which can be used for various operational categories).

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Meat inspection and licensing

### Background:

- The Meat Inspection Program includes 61 inspection staff in four regions (Vancouver Island; Lower Mainland; Interior and Northern British Columbia (B.C.)) supported by management, administration, and a program veterinarian who supports inspection staff to make dispositions regarding animals and carcasses.
- On October 1, 2021, the Ministry of 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 percent of licensed abattoir production is from four abattoirs. Some plants process under 200 animals per year.
- Farmgate and Farmgate Plus licences
  - On October 1, 2021 all previously licensed class D and E facilities 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 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 (to allow sales at nearby markets in another regional district).
  - Farmgate Plus licences are intended for small producers interested in slaughtering their own animals and 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 levels or who want to focus on custom slaughter should explore becoming licensed as a fully inspected abattoir.

### Issue/Opportunity:

- 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 and Food (Ministry) has 61 employees who conduct inspections at provincially licensed meat facilities, and other licensing and administrative support staff.
- There are 60 provincially licensed abattoirs across British Columbia: 31 are licensed for red meat, 21 are licensed for poultry, and 8 are licensed for both.
- There are 102 provincially licensed Farmgate Plus establishments and 7 Farmgate establishments: 45 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.

#### 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. collaborates with other provinces to share information, inform best practices, and continue improving the Meat Inspection Program.

**Issue:**

- Due to the threat of SARS-CoV-2 mink variants, and the potential for these variants to have an impact on vaccine efficacy, the government of British Columbia (B.C.) instituted a phase-out of mink farming on November 26, 2021.

**Background:**

- The decision to ban mink farming was informed by advice provided by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Dr. Bonnie Henry. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) consulted with the PHO and other public health agencies (such as Fraser Health Authority (FHA)) on multiple occasions to understand the public health threat posed by mink farming and SARS-CoV-2. Health officials advised that the threat could not be mitigated by the biosecurity measures that were in place, which is why a phase-out was instituted.
- The phase-out is implemented over three years. This timeframe provides farmers with significant time to decommission their farms and transition to another businesses.
- 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.
    - 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.
  - 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.
- No compensation has been provided to mink farmers. 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 payments and new entrant and business planning programs to aid 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.

- On February 15, 2021, a petition was filed in the B.C. Supreme Court on behalf of the Canada Mink Breeders Association, the B.C. Mink Producers Association, and six mink farmers (the Petitioners) requesting judicial review of the amendments to the Fur Farm Regulation, an injunction on the requirements limiting the number of mink on farms and the ban on breeding until a decision has been made on the petition, and an order for costs and other relief the Court deems appropriate.
- The court denied the injunction application, but judicial review application is ongoing.

**Issue/Opportunity:**

- The judicial review of the decision to ban mink farming is ongoing, and no date has been set for a hearing.
- Ministry staff continue to work with mink farmers on AgriStability and supports for transitioning to other agricultural industries.
- As of August 2022, no live mink remain on farms.

**Opportunity:**

- British Columbia's (B.C.) Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Portfolio

**Background:**

- To improve food security in B.C., there is a need to produce more food for British Columbians through fewer inputs and innovative methods, and to enhance the resilience and future success of B.C.'s agriculture and food system.
  - Recent disasters like heat dome(s), wildfires, and flooding are examples of climate change impacts that B.C.'s producers are facing in the immediate and long term, with impacts to production as well as commercial viability.
  - Poor soil health in B.C. lowers quantity and quality of production and the use of tools like synthetic fertilizers contribute to emissions and do not improve long term conditions.
  - The pandemic highlighted food supply vulnerabilities and emphasized labour constraints.
- Regenerative agriculture practices, supported by the agritech sector, have been identified as a policy shift in agricultural practice to tackle many of the issues producers face today, including the interconnected issues productivity, profitability, food security, and mitigation of climate change.
- The most recent Minister of AF Mandate Letter states commitments to the advancement of regenerative agriculture and agritech:
  - With support from the Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation (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 BC 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 Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- Regenerative agriculture consists of practices that restore soil, water, and biodiversity health to improve overall ecosystem services and make farmland more resilient to climate change and has potential to mitigate against climate change as well. Note that this type of agriculture is focused on soil health and falls outside agriculture like vertical farming, which also contributes to food security.
- Agritech is the development and application of technology that supports food production, such as technology to monitor soil health and robotics to harvest produce.
- Regenerative agriculture and agritech are strategic priorities to support economic growth, good jobs, and the productivity and resiliency of B.C.'s agriculture sector and food system. However, the use of these methods by producers across B.C. varies and shifting producers to this way of production requires strategic effort and supports from the Ministry.
- The Ministry already has a number of initiatives that advance regenerative practices and agritech, including but not limited to:
  - Agriculture Ramp-Up Pilot Program – Mentorship, coaching, and market validation training for agritech entrepreneurs to support sector growth.
  - Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) Innovation programming – a five year federal-provincial cost-shared funding, to end in 2022-23, for research and development, piloting, commercialization, and adoption of new-to-B.C. products, practices, processes, or technologies for the agriculture and food sector.
  - The Minister's Advisory Group on Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech (AGRAA) – Initiated May 25, 2022, tasked with delivering recommendations as well establishing a network. The AGRAA comprises 18 experts (producers, academics, industry associations, private-sector, special advisors) on a one-year appointment.

**Opportunity:**

Due to climate crisis realities, there is urgency within the agriculture sector for solutions.

- Increasing B.C.'s food security is a mandate item.
- The AGRAA has guided the drafting of a Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Strategy to be finalized January 2023. Three key goals have emerged: rapid adoption of regenerative practices and technologies, a resilient and sustainable food system, and the economic sustainability of producers. Such a strategy will inform policy across program areas.
- B.C. supports producers with programs and guidance, led by the Extension Support Services Branch. These have already started to pivot to include and emphasize regenerative practices and agritech.
- The Sustainable Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) is the new five-year federal-provincial cost-sharing fund. It begins in 2023-24. The new agreement has updated priorities of addressing climate change, accelerating the development and adoption of new technologies, and supporting pre-commercialization and start-ups. Alignment with SCAP can fund efforts to advance B.C.'s regenerative and agritech goals. Program design will begin in fall 2022.
- A second regenBC Conference will be held in partnership with the annual Pacific Agriculture Show – the largest producer event in the province – to be held in Abbotsford January 26-28. This combined show is an opportunity to release the strategy on regenerative agriculture and agritech, start to shift the narrative that conventional production is the only method to be profitable, and expand the emphasis on agritech in partnership with JERI. There has been no announcement that the 2023 Pacific Ag Show will incorporate the next regenBC conference.

B.C. is well placed to be a leader of agritech solutions, with export potential, due to the emerging tech sector in Vancouver, a wide breadth of commodities and geography, and existing efforts of support.

- Supporting the development of this sector is a mandate item.
- The AGRAA will determine the structure of the Regenerative Agriculture and Agritech Network (RAAN) in October 2022. This is a mandate item.
  - The network is envisioned to facilitate partnerships between government, industry, and academia to increase opportunities for knowledge exchange and on-farm demonstration of new agritech for solution development and adoption.
  - The Ministry has been working with JERI to understand how the RAAN will work in concert with the BC Centre for Agritech Innovation which is funded by the B.C. and federal governments.
  - Progress on the creation of the RAAN will be the first update since the idea of the network was introduced at the regenBC Conference in September 2021.
- The Ministry of AF is party to the BC-Netherlands Action Plan MOU, alongside the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation and the Netherlands' Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. The Action Plan sets out three key areas of agritech activity to increase food security and the productivity, resilience, diversification, and sustainability of the sector / food systems over the next three years: Government-to-government dialogue; Scientific / academic cooperation; and Industry partnerships and exchange opportunities.
- The Ministry of AF is embarking on several engagements this year with producers to inform supports.
  - This portfolio is managing a \$665,000 research project funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. The outcomes include a new level of detail on B.C.'s agritech landscape as well as insights on producer needs and perspectives on tech, data, and government guidance.



## ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- The BC Food Hub Network aims to foster growth and innovation in the food and beverage processing sector through improved industry access to facilities and business supports.

### Background:

- The BC Food Hub Network (“the Network”) supports the Minister of Agriculture and Food’s mandate commitment to “expand the Grow BC, Feed BC and Buy BC programs to encourage greater food security and local business growth.”
- In 2018, the Ministry commissioned a province-wide survey to identify the current needs, challenges, and opportunities of B.C. food and beverage processors and those interested in entering the industry. It found that companies had issues accessing processing equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and capital and financing necessary to grow and compete. The survey also identified the need for training, education, and business development services.
- In 2019, the Ministry initiated the BC Food Hub Network project. The Network is comprised of regional food processing and innovation hubs (“food hubs”) and an Endowed Food and Beverage Innovation Professorship at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver campus.
  - The Network will also include UBC’s Food and Beverage Innovation Centre, which is expected to be operational in 2024.
  - The Network intends to bring together services and technology that support the province’s agriculture, seafood, and food processing industry and advance innovation in the sector, allowing B.C.’s food and beverage businesses to grow, innovate, and commercialize.
- Food hubs refer to shared-use food and beverage processing facilities that offer agriculture and seafood businesses access to commercial processing space, equipment, expertise, and resources to support business development and growth.
  - They are developed in collaboration with industry, communities, and PSIs to build food and beverage processing capacity, diversity, and opportunities across the province.
  - To date, twelve food hubs are operating or are under development in communities across the province, including Abbotsford, Bowser, Cowichan Valley, Creston (Central Kootenay), Kamloops, Port Alberni, Quesnel, Rock Creek/Greenwood (Kootenay Boundary), Salmon Arm, Surrey, Vancouver, and Victoria.
- The Province funded startup costs for each food hub in the Network in partnership with local municipalities and other organizations. Funding has also been provided to several communities and organizations to develop food hub feasibility studies and business plans.
- Since 2018, the Ministry has spent almost \$12 million to support food hubs.
  - \$8.83 million on 12 food hubs
  - \$567,000 on 12 feasibility studies and business plans
  - \$2.58 million on the UBC Endowed Food & Beverage Innovation Professorship (UBC’s Innovation Centre to be operational in 2024)

### Issue/Opportunity:

- The Ministry has made a significant investment to support the development of the twelve hubs within the Network over the past three years.
- The next stage will focus on two priorities to ensure a solid and robust BC Food Hub Network now and into the future.
  - Ensuring the success of the hubs and their clients now by helping each hub develop

the tools to succeed, grow within its community and become financially sustainable. This includes:

- Partnerships with industry associations to develop and deliver network-wide support services, promotional videos focused on client recruitment and retention, a building hub management capacity and knowledge sharing between hubs
  - Market readiness programming and technical training and workshops for hub clients
  - Assessing and supporting new investments in food processing innovation infrastructure and expansion of hubs such as investments in Sprout Kitchen's transition to a full-scale HAACAP certified food hub and the development of the Okanagan Innovation Food Hub.
- Strengthening the Network as a key B.C. processing sector asset into the future by confirming its governance, services, and funding.
- Build off recommendations in the 2022 Governance Review to inform the structure and path for the BC Food Hub Network.
  - Conducting industry stakeholder engagement and developing and implementing the Network's Governance Strategy

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- The Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a significant funding source for the agriculture sector, will end in April 2023. The next iteration of the agreement, named the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is currently being finalized between the federal government and the provinces/territories.

### Background:

- The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (2018-2023) is the fourth Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Multilateral Framework Agreement on agriculture and food policy.
- Under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP), \$3B was jointly committed across the country. This funding is shared under two broad categories: \$1B in federal-only strategic initiatives and \$2B in cost-shared programs that are funded by 60:40 (F:PT) and delivered by provincial and territorial governments (PTs). In addition to the \$3B, there is also approximately \$1.6B in Business Risk Management Programming annually.
- For B.C., the cost-shared agreement represents approximately \$400.5M over the five-year agreement and supports over 20 programs.
- CAP funding is the primary funding source for Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Ministry) programming.
- The successor of CAP, the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP), is currently being negotiated by Canada and the PTs and is expected to be finalized in December 2022.
- The priorities and guiding principles for the SCAP were set by “the Guelph Statement” which was signed by Ministers of Agriculture in November 2021. The Guelph Statement states the SCAP will have these five focus areas:
  1. Building Sector Capacity, Growth & Competitiveness;
  2. Climate Change & Environment;
  3. Science, Research & Innovation;
  4. Market Development & Trade; and
  5. Resiliency & Public Trust.
- In addition to these priority areas, the Guelph Statement also highlighted new areas of emphasis under the SCAP, including: labour and training; local food capacity and supply; mental health; and Indigenous Peoples and underrepresented/marginalized groups.

### Issue/Opportunity:

Advice/Recommendations; Government Financial Information; Intergovernmental Communications

Advice/Recommendations; Intergovernmental Communications

- Once the Multilateral Framework Agreement is signed, each PT will negotiate their own bilateral agreements with Canada, which will set out the overarching program framework each PT will deliver over the course of the framework.
- The Ministry is currently planning and scoping out programs in preparation for the bilateral negotiations with Canada.
- B.C will commence bilateral negotiations in late October 2022 and are expecting to sign the bilateral agreement by December 2022, with programs launching in April 2023.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- Positioning B.C.'s agriculture, agri-food, and seafood sector to optimize trade and market development opportunities.

### Background:

- In 2020, British Columbia (B.C.) exported \$4.8B of agriculture, food, beverage (\$3.5B) and seafood (\$1.3B) products to 151 international markets. This was an increase of three percent of exports compared to 2019.
- The international markets with significant growth in 2020 included South Korea (38 percent increase) and Hong Kong (35 percent increase).
- The top exported products in 2020 were farmed Atlantic salmon (\$566M), food preparations for manufacturing & natural health products (\$439M) and baked goods (\$258.4M).
- The B.C. products with the highest percentage growth in 2020 were cranberries (40 percent increase), pork (34 percent increase) and peppers (34 percent increase).
- Trade policy is shared jurisdiction. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) leads Canada's official response on all international concerns and trade negotiations. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), remains closely linked in all agriculture and agri-food conversations.
- In B.C., the Ministry of Jobs Economic Recovery and Innovation (JERI) leads the province's official responses about trade. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) works in tandem with JERI to explore opportunities and respond to issues related to trade when agriculture, food, beverage or seafood products are involved. AF also leverages Canadian Agriculture Partnership funding, a \$3B federal/provincial/territorial cost-shared funding framework, through a Memorandum of Understanding with JERI to coordinate export market development activities and events for B.C. agriculture and food products in priority markets.
- AF works closely with industry associations and provides expert insight on our sectors to ensure trade risks can be minimized and opportunities can be identified and acted on.
- Canada's major trade agreements include the Canadian-European Economic and Trade Partnership (CETA), ratified in 2017; the Comprehensive and Progressive Trade Partnership (CPTPP), ratified in 2018; and, the Canada, US, Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), ratified in 2020.
- Canada is currently negotiating the Canada-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement; Canada-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement; and the Canada-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.
- The next iteration of CAP, the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP), a \$3.5B agreement between Canada and provinces and territories, outlines market development and trade as a priority. This includes collaborating to pursue and defend Canadian trade interests; supporting market diversification and efforts to remove barriers to interprovincial trade; supporting export readiness and identifying and pursue market development opportunities abroad and domestically; and meeting domestic and international demand for sustainable primary production and processing practices.

**Issue/Opportunity:**

- Working closely with provincial (JERI) and federal partners (AAFC, GAC), the ministry is advocating for trade opportunities both domestically through SCAP, and internationally through existing and emerging trade agreements.
- To support the development of export markets for B.C. agriculture and food products, AF and JERI are collaboratively supporting a coordinated industry presence at the following trade events this year:
  - Seafood Expo Global (April 2022, Spain)
  - Food and Hotel Asia (October 2022, Singapore)
  - China Fish and Seafood Show (November 2022, China)
  - Natural Products Expo West (March 2023, United States)
  - Seafood Expo North America (March 2023, United States)
- AF is also providing targeted support to B.C.'s apple sector to assist industry with the development of a 5-10 year market development strategy and 2-3-year marketing and sales plan. Phase 1 of this work (November 2022 – March 2023) entails conducting local market research to gain an understanding of B.C. consumer behavior, motivations and purchasing habits for apples, and export market research through engagement with in-market buyers and experts in selected markets of opportunity to confirm competitiveness, market entry requirements, and consumer preferences.
- B.C. agriculture and food producers, processors and associations can access cost-shared funding support through the BC Agrifood and Seafood Market Development Program to participate in trade events and undertake related activities to identify, access, target and develop market opportunities outside the province.

## CORPORATE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY NOTE

### Issue:

- In response to calls from some leaders in British Columbia's (B.C.) tree fruit industry to address the growing economic struggles of tree fruit producers, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) engaged with industry to develop the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan.

### Background:

- B.C.'s tree fruit industry (particularly apple growers) has seen reduced acreage and profitability over the last decade.
- B.C.'s apple acreage has declined from 20,000 acres in the late 1990s to just over 6,000 in 2022.
  - B.C. produced 104 018 megatonnes (MT) of apples in 2019 with grower farm cash receipts of \$67 M. 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.
- This reduced profitability has been compounded by COVID-19 and weather-related events in 2020 and 2021.
- Government has supported the tree fruit industry with over \$35M in the last three years. This support included:
  - Approximately \$28M paid through programs administered by the Ministry's Business Risk Management Branch to offset crop losses.
  - \$3M through the Tree Fruit Replant Program to replace older, unpopular varieties with modern varieties that have strong consumer demand.
  - \$5M through the Tree Fruit Competitiveness Fund for marketing, infrastructure, and research to support a competitive tree fruit sector in B.C.
- The Ministry launched the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Project in February 2021. The project analysed the industry's current circumstances and challenges.
  - The project approach included consideration of other jurisdictions, previous studies, and an assessment of the roles and responsibilities of industry organizations; and extensive consultations with the industry (growers, packers, organizations, associations, etc.).
  - Key industry stakeholders served in an Advisory Group for the Project.
- This Project work resulted in a Plan that was publicly released by the Minister as "The Path Forward: A blueprint for B.C.'s tree fruit industry" on November 12, 2021, with 19 comprehensive recommendations intended to preserve B.C.'s iconic tree fruit industry.
- The Plan and all 19 recommendations were fully endorsed by members of the Industry Advisory Committee, which includes elected representatives from the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association, BC Cherry Association, New Tree Fruit Varieties Development Council, BC Grape Growers' Association, and others.
- Implementation of the recommendations is currently underway with significant support from AF staff and contractors.

### Issue/Opportunity:

- There are a number of contributing factors that have led to the tree fruit sector in B.C. not being able to adapt to changing market conditions. These include but are not limited to:
  - The industry is quite fragmented with no united representation, vision or clear long term strategic plan. For example, once a representative voice and effective lobby organization representing the tree fruit industry, the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association now only represents approximately 320 of the 800 tree fruit producers.

- Ongoing leadership and governance challenges in the tree fruit industry.
- Structural rigidity and outdated long-standing approaches of some existing industry 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.

Advice/Recommendations

- The Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan and the supporting Industry Advisory Committee has been endorsed by all industry stakeholder organizations. The Industry Advisory Committee and the framework they are operating under has allowed for cohesion, collaboration and prioritization of issues and resources across the tree fruit industry.
- Although there continues to be many diverse interests and lobbying organizations representing the tree fruit industry, redirecting these organizations to work collaboratively within the framework of the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Plan - Industry Advisory Committee is the recommended approach endorsed by AF and the tree fruit industry as a whole.



# Appendix E

**30-60-90 Report**  
**Ministry of Agriculture and Food**  
**Submitted for: November 1, 2022**

Issue	Status/Key Milestones/Next Steps
<b>30 Days</b>	
Avian Influenza (AI)	<p>As of October 14, AI has been confirmed in commercial and non-commercial poultry settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI detection in 1 commercial flock and 7 small flocks since September 12.</li> <li>• Animal Health Centre (lab) has tested 3,500 samples since September 12 as part of surveillance and movement testing.</li> <li>• Animal Health Centre is providing AI testing service 7-days a week to meet the needs of the industry and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).</li> </ul> <p>The Ministry continues to work with the CFIA Western Incident Command Post and industry stakeholders.</p>
Release of selected 2021 Census of Agriculture data	Release data tables and a provincial profile document on the ministry's website, containing key provincial census information such as total farmland area, number of farms, farm operators, capital, employees, etc. See 2016 example <a href="#">here</a> .
Release of 2021 Farm Cash Receipt, exports, and employment data	Release data tables and sector snapshot documents on the ministry's website by early November. Data includes total sales of agriculture, seafood and food and beverage processing sectors, GDP, exports and employment. See 2020 example <a href="#">here</a> .
BC School Food Programs Event	Minister Popham will be speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Minister Whiteside on the current shared mandate for school food programs. The event will take place at Royal Bay Secondary School on November 9.
<b>60 Days</b>	
Indigenous Advisory Council on Food and Agriculture Q3 Meeting	Virtual Q3 meeting scheduled for December 8.
<b>90 Days</b>	

# Appendix F

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