



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

The Best Place on Earth



THE BRITISH COLUMBIA
AGRICULTURE PLAN

Growing
a Healthy
Future for
B.C. Families



Contents

Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families	3
Executive Summary	5
Introduction and Vision	8
I. Producing Local Food in a Changing World	10
Local B.C. Foods	10
Community Food Systems	10
Local Food and Health	12
A Safe, Secure Food Supply	13
II. Meeting Environmental and Climate Challenges	14
On-Farm Environmental Management	14
Ecological Goods and Services	15
Agriculture and Climate Change	15
Water Management	17
Range Management	18
Invasive Plants	19
III. Building Innovative and Profitable Family Farm Businesses	20
Management of Business Risk	20
Sector Strategic Plans	21
Taxation	21
Human Resources and Succession Planning	22
Innovation, Research and Extension	23
Trade and Inter-Governmental Initiatives	24
IV. Building First Nations Agricultural Capacity	28
V. Bridging the Urban/Agriculture Divide	30
Reconnecting Children with the Source of Their Food	30
Agricultural Land Reserve	31
Resolving Farm Practices Complaints	32
Local Government Agricultural Planning	33
Conclusion	34
Appendix A: Implementation of the B.C. Agriculture Plan	36
Appendix B: Agriculture Links	42
Appendix C: The Committee Process	43



Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families

In June 2005, with a committee of five MLAs from across the province, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning Val Roddick was tasked to develop the framework for a new provincial Agriculture Plan. We heard firsthand from many members of the industry, as well as scientists, teachers, conservationists, community members, health professionals, regional politicians, government officials and the general public.

The result is the ***British Columbia Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families***, which sets a strong foundation for the future of agriculture in our province. Its strategies focus on meeting and benefiting from environmental and climate challenges and ensuring innovations drive a competitive agriculture sector. Agriculture contributes four per cent of the province's total greenhouse gas emissions, yet has great potential to quickly become carbon neutral, and help achieve our target of reducing greenhouse gases by 33 per cent by 2020.

Across B.C., we are working toward long-term environmental sustainability and economic vibrancy in local communities and industries. Our strength is in our diversity. Our strength is in our farming families and the adaptability of the industry.

The agriculture sector is integral to our province. Together, we will ensure that B.C.'s agriculture industry remains competitive and sustainable for future generations.



The Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Val Roddick
Parliamentary Secretary for
Agriculture Planning and Delta
South MLA

The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia



Executive Summary

Throughout our history and well into our future, agriculture has and will continue to play an essential role in the social and economic well-being of British Columbia. However, agriculture is at a crossroads in responding to pressures to produce local healthy food at a competitive price in a global marketplace, while facing an increasingly sophisticated consumer who is concerned about the environment and is demanding quality, value-added products.

Agriculture is ideally positioned to make contributions to climate change mitigation, a cleaner, greener environment and the improved health and well-being of British Columbians.

In order to achieve long-term success for the agriculture and food sector, British Columbia needs a plan for the future. The B.C. Agriculture Plan outlines 23 strategies that create a roadmap to sustain and facilitate the growth and diversification of the industry while increasing public awareness, understanding and support for the people who produce our food. These strategies are articulated within five overarching themes that encompass the challenges and opportunities faced by farm families today. At the heart of this plan is the Province of British Columbia's agriculture vision:

Continued development and growth of an economically viable and resilient agriculture and food sector which contributes significantly to:

- *the health of British Columbians;*
- *climate change mitigation;*
- *environmental sustainability; and*
- *a growing B.C. economy.*

I. Producing Local Food in a Changing World

The tremendous regional differences in B.C. from a climatic, geographic, economic and demographic perspective have resulted in the most diverse agricultural production of any province in Canada. This diversity provides unique opportunities to supply fresh, healthy food directly to consumers, while reducing the distance from farm to plate. Direct farm marketing and further development of local food markets can contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting food from around the world. B.C. farmers are also looking increasingly beyond traditional farm enterprises to generate income. Some farmers have diversified into food processing and others are taking advantage of B.C.'s natural beauty by expanding into agri-tourism.

Strategies:

1. Promotion of B.C. agriculture and food products at the provincial and local levels.
2. Implement initiatives to strengthen community food systems.
3. Implement initiatives to improve childhood health using B.C. agriculture and food products.
4. Promotion of human, plant and animal health, and food safety.

II. Meeting Environmental and Climate Challenges

The world has turned its attention to the critical issues of environmental impact and climate change, and agriculture plays an important part in helping British Columbians address these challenges. Agriculture's value to our way of life extends beyond the production of food. Agricultural land provides ecological goods and services that are valued by society, such as the provision of wildlife habitat, air quality, water quality and the conservation of biodiversity. We will put an emphasis on developing agricultural opportunities for addressing climate change – contributing to B.C.'s commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent by 2020.

Strategies:

5. Implement initiatives to improve environmental management in the agriculture and agri-food sectors.
6. Implement approaches for farmers to receive benefits for ecological goods and services (EG&S).
7. Address climate change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from food production and processing.
8. Integrate needs of agriculture in provincial water management policies and programs.
9. Optimize forage production for livestock grazing on rangeland.
10. Enhance and coordinate province-wide, invasive plant management.

III. Building Innovative and Profitable Family Farm Businesses

Agriculture can be a profitable business for both big and small producers. Keeping B.C.'s agriculture sector economically viable and sustainable is key to preserving farm families and a society that values all of the attributes of healthy, local food and a vital, rural landscape. To ensure viability in an industry undergoing unprecedented change, farmers will need to embrace new technologies and innovations, particularly to adapt to farming in a warmer climate.

Agriculture production carries inherent risks and uncertainty – from natural disasters, to disease, to labour shortages – which can dramatically affect business viability. B.C. has been working with the federal government to strengthen the suite of Business Risk Management Programs and support supply-managed systems to provide greater stability to farm incomes.

Strategies:

11. Ensure that programs intended to mitigate business risks meet the needs of B.C.'s diverse agriculture sector.
12. Implement sector-based strategic plans.
13. Review farm property assessment and Provincial Sales Tax (PST) policy as it applies to agriculture.
14. Assist the agriculture industry with human resources, succession planning and new entrants.
15. Strengthen current extension services.

16. Establish an industry-led, self-sustaining agri-food and bioproducts innovation centre.
17. Represent B.C. agriculture interests with the federal government and other jurisdictions.

IV. Building First Nations Agricultural Capacity

Agriculture can play a key role for First Nations in developing economic opportunities while ensuring a supply of local, healthy food for their communities. We will work to expand the capacity for First Nations to deliver their own agriculture extension while working to develop a First Nations brand that can be used in the marketing of their unique food and agri-food products.

Strategies:

18. Facilitate First Nations participation in agriculture initiatives.
19. Develop programs for First Nations at postsecondary institutions to build agricultural skill sets.

V. Bridging the Urban/Agriculture Divide

There was once a great distance between “the city” and “the country,” but increasing urban populations and sprawling suburban development have brought the city’s borders right up against the farm. The differences in attitudes, lifestyle and priorities of the urban versus the rural populace, which is commonly referred to as the “urban/agriculture divide,” has become a big issue in agriculture. The more the public is aware of the importance of agriculture to their own economic, physical and mental health, the more understanding there will be of the needs of local farmers. The government firmly believes that the preservation of agricultural land through the Agricultural Land Reserve serves a compelling public interest, in addition to playing a role in zoning land in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use.

Strategies:

20. Increase awareness and interest in agriculture and food among B.C. youth.
21. Preservation of agricultural land for future generations of farm and ranch families.
22. Implement strategies to minimize conflict between rural and urban residents.
23. Increase agriculture industry input at the local government level.

Conclusion

The B.C. Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families reflects the values and concerns that the public and farm community voiced to the Agriculture Plan Committee about the future of agriculture in British Columbia. It provides a vision and direction for sustaining farm families, improving profitability through direct farm marketing while playing an important role in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.



Introduction and Vision

British Columbia has a proud and storied history tied to our rich and diverse natural resources. Throughout our history and well into our future, agriculture has and will continue to play an essential role in the social and economic well-being of British Columbia. Access to safe, locally produced food, an emphasis on climate change, environment and healthy eating, and a shared understanding of urban and rural interests are all key to the agriculture industry's long-term growth and sustainability.



Century Farm Awards

Century Farm Awards are designed to honour pioneers whose farms or ranches have been in the family for 100 years or more.

The original Century Farms were farms or ranches with a minimum of five acres (two hectares) owned by the immediate descendants of the original owners and operated as a farm or ranch at all times. They could also be

an institute or industry association that has been active for 100 years. The recently expanded award program also honours a farm or ranch that has been owned and operated by the same family for 100 years or more, but whose owners do not now live on it or operate it or have moved from one location to another.

The expanded Century Farm program celebrates the resiliency of B.C. farmers and the economic strength and diversity of the industry.

Agriculture is currently undergoing unprecedented change, posing both significant challenges and exciting opportunities. The B.C. agriculture and food sectors are facing fierce global competition, increased costs of production, intense competition for inputs such as labour, land and energy, and uncertainty as a result of major events such as disease, drought and floods. At the same time, opportunities for the sector include developing and commercializing new scientific advances and diversifying into higher-value products, marketing directly to the consumer, and pursuing other activities such as agri-tourism. Agriculture is also ideally positioned to make major contributions to climate change mitigation, a cleaner, greener environment, and the improved health and well-being of British Columbians.

B.C. Agriculture Council

B.C. farmers recognized the importance of having a unified provincial organization that would represent farmers in all sectors and all regions of the province, forming the B.C. Agriculture Council in 1997 to meet that need.

The council fosters cooperation and a collective response to matters affecting the future of agriculture in the province and facilitates programs and service delivery for a number of programs that both benefit the industry and meet government objectives.

The council operates as a partner with government on a wide range of initiatives, including the following:

- ◆ Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment – which serves as a forum for resolving agriculture-environment issues.
- ◆ Delivery of the National Farm Stewardship Program and Environmental Farm Plan Program, which has been responsible for the implementation of significant on-farm initiatives for improved environmental management.
- ◆ Agri-Food Partners in Healthy Eating, in cooperation with ActNow BC, provides increased opportunities for British Columbians to make healthy food choices.
- ◆ Partnership Committee on Labour – which serves as a forum to help address the labour needs of the sector.

In order to achieve long-term success for the agriculture and food sector, British Columbia needs a plan for the future. To create the framework required for such a plan, the Agriculture Plan Committee met with British Columbians from across the province (see Appendix C, Committee Process). The committee heard from a wide range of stakeholders on their concerns and ideas about the future of agriculture and the food-supply system. Hundreds of written submissions were received, and the Committee held numerous discussions with producers, processors, retail organizations, agencies from all levels of government, community groups and other interest groups. This feedback combined with the work and dedication of the committee members was integral to the development of the B.C. Agriculture Plan.

The 23 strategies outlined in this Agriculture Plan create a roadmap to sustain and facilitate the growth and diversification of the industry while increasing public awareness, understanding and support for the food production system. At the heart of this plan is the Province of British Columbia's agriculture vision:

Continued development and growth of an economically viable and resilient agriculture and food sector which contributes significantly to:

- *the health of British Columbians;*
- *climate change mitigation;*
- *environmental sustainability; and*
- *a growing B.C. economy.*

B.C. Food Processors Association

The B.C. Food Processors Association was formed in 2004 to develop and support the food processing sector across the province. The association serves its members and the industry by:

- ◆ Serving as a communications link and information bank on issues that impact the growth of B.C.'s food, beverage and nutraceutical processing industries.
- ◆ Representing B.C. food, beverage and nutraceutical processors with WorkSafeBC and government.
- ◆ Administering the B.C. Meat Industry Enhancement Strategy, an all-encompassing strategy designed to increase the licensed slaughter capacity of B.C.
- ◆ Championing and leading the B.C. Food and Beverage Processing Industry Initiative and the Processing Industry Strategic Plan.

The association has also focused on labour issues, initiatives that encourage practices leading to a clean and sustainable environment and works collaboratively with government, the B.C. Agriculture Council and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. to address issues that affect the entire agriculture and food value chain.

I. Producing Local Food in a Changing World

The Town of Smithers has a very active farmer's market, located in the centre of our community that is well supported at the local level and is the key venue for producers of local agricultural products to market agricultural products. Local organic food production and marketing is a critical factor with respect to encouraging sustainability of food sources given rising fuel costs, global warming and related food security issues.

James A. Davidson
Mayor, Town of Smithers



All British Columbians should have access to safe, locally produced food.

B.C. will enhance its market brand to profile high-quality products reflecting our province's reputation for environmental sustainability and healthy living.

One hundred years ago British Columbians grew much of their own food. While the trend towards a global economy has over the years changed our food production and distribution patterns, we are now refocusing on local food as a result of climate, environmental and social realities. Increasing importance is being placed on producing local, healthy food and reducing our environmental and carbon footprint, thereby promoting the economic viability of the B.C. agriculture and food sector.

Local B.C. Foods

Strategy 1: Promotion of B.C. agriculture and food products at the provincial and local levels.

The tremendous regional differences in B.C. from a climatic, geographic, economic and demographic perspective have resulted in the most diverse agricultural production of any province in Canada. This diversity provides unique opportunities for promoting local food products, thereby reducing the distance from farm to plate and ensuring the supply of a wide range of fresh, healthy local food.

To ensure that B.C.'s agriculture sector can thrive in regional and local markets, B.C. products need to maintain their good reputation and become the products of choice for consumers who are overwhelmed with the wide selection of foods from around the world. We will work with sectors throughout the agriculture value chain – from producer to processor to retailer to consumer – to maintain a high level of consumer confidence and increased choice of B.C. food products.

An industry-led marketing program will be introduced to increase awareness of B.C. products, and we will develop a “food miles” initiative to create public awareness of the distance food products have been transported.

Community Food Systems

Strategy 2: Implement initiatives to strengthen community food systems.

The growing success of farmers' markets and other direct farm marketing initiatives have had the effect of strengthening the connection between the people who purchase B.C. farm products and the farming and ranching

Why the interest in small farms? They produce local foodstuffs. They provide people an opportunity to make some income from farming. They generate green space values, valuable to everyone. They're essential to the health of the small communities – who runs the volunteer fire department and all the other things that have to be done in small communities? In the longer term, their knowledge, their skills and their land will be essential for our future. So it isn't just a matter of preserving land, it's also about people knowing that land and being able to use it when the time comes.

Frank Mitchell
Metchosin



A sustainable food system is one where every resident of the province has assured access to the food that is required for a healthy, active, productive life.

Cathleen Kneen
B.C. Food Systems Network
(Kelowna public session)

families who produce them. These direct sales can contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting food and can raise awareness of the variety and health benefits of B.C.-grown agricultural products.

We will also work with community and farm groups and local governments to help facilitate projects that will strengthen the systems in place within the community to bring locally produced food products to market. This will include the development of community gardens and bringing small agricultural lots into production in both urban and rural areas.

We will also continue to support other initiatives that serve to strengthen the connection between the people who produce food and those who consume it. Some farm families, for example, have diversified into food processing. Others are taking advantage of B.C.'s natural beauty by expanding into agri-tourism, which has become one of the fastest growing sectors in B.C.'s \$10-billion tourism industry. Culinary tourism is an emerging concept, and agricultural fairs and exhibitions attract over 1.6 million patrons each year.

Local Food and Health

Strategy 3: Implement initiatives to improve childhood health using B.C. agriculture and food products.

Food is implicitly connected to nutrition and health. Healthy food choices are part of the Province's important health promotion platform, ActNow BC. Promoting B.C. fruits, vegetables, milk and other food products as a source of healthy eating for British Columbians is playing a key role to help B.C. lead the way in North America in healthy living. The School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and the B.C. Dairy Foundation's Elementary School Milk Program are providing opportunities for school age children to make healthy food choices. These programs also provide an opportunity for students to learn about and experience fresh B.C. foods. The 2006 report by the Select Standing Committee on Health, "A Strategy for Combating Childhood Obesity and Physical Inactivity in British Columbia," offered several key recommendations related to agriculture and food. These recommendations are being put into action.



A Safe, Secure Food Supply

Strategy 4: Promotion of human, plant and animal health, and food safety.

Measures to promote food safety, implement traceability systems and control plant and animal diseases are essential to achieve a safe, secure food supply into the future. For example, the recently enacted provincial Meat Inspection Regulation will ensure that all British Columbians have the protection afforded by consistent meat safety standards, no matter where in the province they live. The Province has supported the meat processing industry in adjusting to the requirements by providing a transition period, funding a \$5-million Meat Transition Assistance Program and covering inspection fees to September 30, 2012. As a result, local licensed meat processing capacity is being developed across the province, promoting regional economic development.

To enable more extensive and rapid analysis for potential disease-causing agents, we are building a \$14.5-million Containment Level 3 laboratory in Abbotsford as part of our Animal Health Centre. A Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Support plan has been developed to enhance B.C.'s response to occurrences of significant disease events. With respect to plants, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land's five-year Plant Health Strategy is a strategic science-based approach to prioritize and address the plant health risks and issues that affect productivity, environmental sustainability and competitiveness of agricultural crops in B.C.

These initiatives will greatly improve the province's protection of animal, plant and human health.

Circle Farm Tours

Circle Farm Tours began in the Agassiz area in 2003 and have since expanded to other regions. In 2007, the program was recognized by the Economic Development Association of B.C. for its creative community economic development.



A Circle Farm Tour is a road map that takes a visitor around in a large circle visiting farms and producers along the way. The tours are self-guided, so visitors travel in their own car, at their own pace, according to what timing suits the traveller. An informative brochure acts as the guide, complete with a detailed map outlining the route and stops along the way. Some venues are event-based and some have seasonal hours, but others are open year-round. Tourists can visit a traditional working farm, buy fresh produce direct from the grower, check out a bustling farmers' market or step behind-the-scenes for a look at a modern agricultural operation.

Regional Distribution of B.C. Farms & Gross Receipts

	Number of Farms	Gross Receipts (\$Millions)
BRITISH COLUMBIA	19,844	2,652
Economic Development Regions		
Vancouver Island-Coast	2,855	164
Lower Mainland-Southwest	5,410	1,661
Thompson-Okanagan	5,700	450
Kootenay	1,349	69
Cariboo	1,781	112
North Coast	134	3
Nechako	886	55
Peace River	1,729	139

Source: Statistics Canada - Census of Agriculture 2006.

II. Meeting Environmental and Climate Challenges

B.C. agriculture needs a plan that recognizes and rewards farmers who have always farmed in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Rose Morrison
University College of the Fraser Valley

The agricultural sector will contribute to our provincial greenhouse gas emission reduction targets through shifts in farm practices, development of new local markets and the advancement of new technologies.

B.C. leads the world in addressing the challenging issue of climate change, and agriculture plays an important role. Agriculture's value to our way of life extends beyond the production of food. Agricultural and environmental considerations go hand-in-hand throughout the province, from land and water use to climate to air quality to conservation. This Agriculture Plan will dovetail with the B.C. government's broad initiatives to address environmental and climate challenges and opportunities, to benefit future generations of British Columbians.

Environmental Farm Plan Program

The environmental farm plan program (EFP) was designed to support environmental sustainability of air, water and bio-diversity at the farm level. The program provides funding to implement on-farm actions to reduce agri-environmental risks. Set up under the Federal-Provincial Agriculture Policy Framework, this program is delivered by the B.C. Agriculture Council and its

member producer associations throughout British Columbia. The key principles of the program are that producers drive it, participation is voluntary and confidentiality is ensured.

Over the last three years, almost 2,000 farmers and ranchers in B.C. have completed environmental farm plans for their agricultural operations and many have proceeded with a wide range of agricultural/environmental enhancement projects identified in their individual plans.

If you want to start an EFP, visit http://www.bcac.bc.ca/efp_programs.htm for more info.

On-Farm Environmental Management

Strategy 5: Implement initiatives to improve environmental management in the agriculture and agri-food sectors.

Technological innovation and extension will be used to promote farm practices that ensure measurable results in minimizing the agriculture industry's impact on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, water and air quality, and the environment generally. Building on the success of Environmental Farm Plans, we will continue to work with farmers to adopt beneficial management practices that reduce their impact on the environment. B.C. was recognized nationally for the Environmental Farm Plan program in 2006, and now has almost 2,000 farm plans completed on B.C. farms and ranches.

B.C. was the first province to enact provisions to enable the marketing of certified organic products and we remain leaders in growing and producing organic food. We will continue to examine opportunities for B.C. to take further advantage of the growing demand for organic food at the local, domestic and international level.



Ecological Goods and Services

Strategy 6: Implement approaches for farmers to receive benefits for ecological goods and services (EG&S).

Agricultural land provides ecological goods and services beyond food production that are recognized by society, such as provision of wildlife habitat, air quality and the conservation of biodiversity. We will begin to recognize the ecological goods and services provided by farmland and establish means of providing benefits to producers for these public goods. British Columbia's wide range of bio-climatic zones has resulted in more wildlife species than any other province. Many of these species thrive on and near farms because of the extensive nature of farmland, often resulting in crop and livestock losses. To help limit conflicts between agriculture and wildlife, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Ministry of Environment will be addressing wildlife-agriculture conflict issues as a priority. As a means of recognizing the contribution of farmland in maintaining wildlife habitat, we will develop and implement a strategic wildlife damage reduction plan that will include compensation funding for B.C. farmers and ranchers.

A positive question would be, "Who is well-placed to enhance the environment?" and a good answer would be "Farmers," since we are out here not just 24/7 but 365/life.

Duncan Baynes, P.Eng
Chilco Orchard, Keremeos, B.C.



Agriculture and Climate Change

Strategy 7: Address climate change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from food production and processing.

Climate change has implications for B.C. agriculture in a number of ways. Agriculture is a contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, and must play a role in mitigating its own emissions through increased awareness (Environmental Farm Plans) and changed farm practices (Beneficial Management Practices). Agriculture is challenged with reducing greenhouse gas emissions from a range of sources, including livestock, manure, fertilizer applications, farm buildings and engine emissions.

Climate Action Initiative for Agriculture

In November 2007 the Premier of British Columbia convened an Agriculture Climate Action Forum in Kamloops. It included presentations by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, industry representatives and members of the provincial Climate Action Secretariat. In response to the issues identified in the forum, the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. and the British Columbia Agriculture Council have jointly established the Climate Action Initiative project. The project was initiated to work in partnership with the Province in assessing the impact of climate change on agriculture and agri-food, and assessing the sector's challenges and opportunities to respond within an agricultural Climate Change Action Plan.

The sector will also need to anticipate and plan for any impacts of climate change on its productive capability. Research and innovation will be key to addressing adaptation, and will ensure the agriculture industry can respond to climate change by taking advantage of new growing opportunities and reducing or mitigating the risk posed by the negative impacts of climate change. Finally, land use policy will be developed to provide appropriate incentives to ensure agriculture land retains its potential to sequester carbon, participate in bioenergy opportunities while balancing the need for food production and economic activity in rural communities.

Anaerobic Digestion

Anaerobic digestion (AD) is a natural process that recovers methane from livestock manure, and offers both economic and environmental benefits. The process involves anaerobic bacteria, which break down or “digest” manure or other organic materials in the absence of oxygen, and produce biogas. The biogas is captured to generate green electricity, thereby keeping it out of the atmosphere to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions, this technology will virtually eliminate odours from the manure, which is an important consideration in highly populated areas such as the Fraser Valley. AD is also highly effective in reducing pathogens such as E.coli and salmonella, and can improve the immediate fertilizer value of the manure.

As a result of recent improvements in technology and increased energy costs, AD technology is now in use on thousands of livestock farms in northern Europe. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands is assessing the feasibility of adopting this technology on B.C. livestock farms in collaboration with the agriculture sector.



11-year-old Levi Barlow (second from left) from Soda Creek, B.C. demonstrated his homemade anaerobic digester to a group of agriculture professionals in Abbotsford in July 2007. Levi also took home the silver medal for Level II - Biotechnology & Pharmaceutical Sciences at the 2007 Central Interior Science Exhibition for his work in the biogas field.

Some advances have been made – in 2006, almost half of B.C.’s total land prepared for seeding was in no tillage and conservation tillage, up from 35 per cent in 2001, leading to improved soil carbon sequestration and storage. Increasing the adoption of beneficial management practices will result in farms supplying carbon credits to those industries that are restricted in their abilities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, agriculture can play a significant role in mitigating climate change more broadly in B.C.

The bioeconomy refers to an economy in which goods and services are derived from renewable, organic materials rather than non-renewable sources such as fossil fuels. The new **British Columbia Bioenergy Strategy: Growing Our Natural Energy Advantage** will lead the bioeconomy in Western Canada. Agriculture will benefit from its participation in the Bioenergy Network that will research and invest in technologies that support new bioenergy initiatives, thus providing opportunities for the agriculture industry to diversify their income through producing feedstocks for this emerging industry.

We will facilitate opportunities to turn agricultural residues like plant material, animal and organic waste into renewable energy. This will have a positive impact on how waste is treated in rural communities and will help reduce

overall greenhouse gas emissions. We will continue to assess the suitability of alternative energies for replacing fossil fuels or as an alternative income source. Support for industry in investing in alternative energy systems such as geothermal, wind, solar and biomass can reduce costs for farmers and contribute to producing energy for society.

The agriculture and food industries must take positive action to reduce their impact on climate. Actions are underway to meet this challenge and to further develop opportunities for the agri-food industry to benefit from its ability to help society meet its climate change goals.

Water Management

Strategy 8: Integrate needs of agriculture in provincial water management policies and programs.

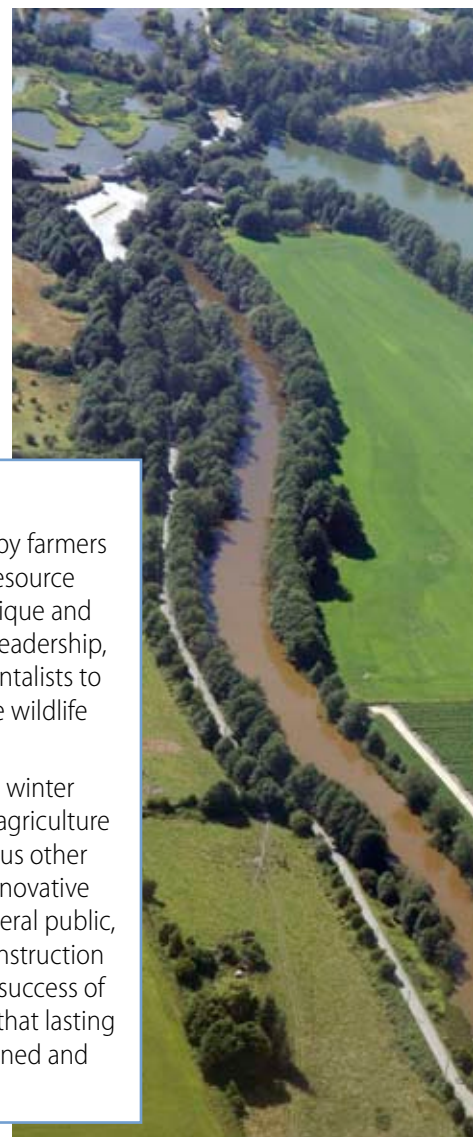
As the agricultural sector is highly dependent on the supply of clean water, provincial water management will reflect the interests and needs of farmers and ranchers. Future planning for water will acknowledge the agriculture industry's current and future need for water. Water management planning processes can provide clarity to agricultural users about sustainable water withdrawals, management of environmental impacts and could also establish water reserves for agricultural lands.

Programs on water infrastructure, water supply augmentation and water demand management can help to address potential shortages for agricultural and other uses. Programs will encourage agricultural water conservation and continued leadership on water use efficiencies. There must also be more coordination with local, regional and federal governments to address effective long-term flood control measures, fish habitat and drinking water issues.

Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust

The Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust (Trust) was established in 1996 by farmers and supporters of wildlife as a way to bring together these differing resource perspectives. Farmers and wildlife in Delta share some of the most unique and productive farmland and wildlife habitat in B.C. Through community leadership, this unique organization has been able to get farmers and environmentalists to work cooperatively to ensure agriculture continues to prosper and the wildlife that use this farmland can co-exist with farm operations.

The Trust initiates and supports several stewardship programs such as winter cover crops, grassland set-asides and hedgerows. These benefit both agriculture and wildlife species such as migratory waterfowl, raptors and numerous other bird species. Most of the farm community has participated in these innovative stewardship programs with significant financial support from the general public, the farm community and a trust fund established as a result of the construction of the third runway at the Vancouver International Airport. The key to success of this organization and its stewardship programs is rooted in the belief that lasting solutions to complex land use and resource challenges must be designed and implemented by those who are directly affected by these issues.





Range Management

Strategy 9: Optimize forage production for livestock grazing on rangeland.

British Columbia is unique in Canada in that 94 per cent of the land base is managed by the Province on behalf of the citizens of B.C. Every community in the province depends to some degree on continued access to Crown land and the wise management of this resource. Management techniques to improve the quality of forage production on rangeland will be explored. As a consequence of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, it is also expected that forage production will naturally increase for a period of time, which could benefit the cattle industry if managed appropriately to minimize impacts on GHG emissions from land-use change. The development of a regional agriculture sector strategy has, for example, been identified by the Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition, and such initiatives will be pursued.

Agroforestry

Agroforestry is the blending of agriculture and forestry by producing both agricultural products and forestry products from the same parcel of land.

Agroforestry can take the form of in-forest farming, where high-value specialty products such as mushrooms, nuts, herbs or floral greenery are cultivated under the protection of a forest canopy modified to provide the correct growing conditions. Another form is “silvopasture,” where cattle or sheep graze in a forest environment, which is managed to produce not only grass for livestock but also trees for wood products.

Agroforestry may involve the introduction of trees/shrubs along riparian zones that are currently cropped or grazed or on rangelands to provide farmers with economic diversification and enhanced carbon sequestration and other environmental services. As part of an ecologically-based land management system, agroforestry practices can contribute to ecosystem diversity and processes that add to long-term sustainability and environmental quality.

British Columbia is well positioned to take advantage of agroforestry opportunities because of the wide range of natural ecosystems and bioclimatic zones throughout the province.

Invasive Plants

Strategy 10: Enhance and coordinate province-wide, invasive-plant management.

Many areas of the province have been significantly impacted by invasive plants – non-indigenous species – which have the ability to severely affect the biodiversity of our natural ecosystems and to permanently alter landscapes. The Ministries of Agriculture and Lands, Environment, Forests and Range, and Transportation and Highways will continue to build partnerships with stakeholders such as the federal and local governments, universities, the private sector, and the Invasive Plant Council of B.C. to develop collaborative strategies for effective invasive plant management.

A key objective is to strengthen the information base that is and will be critical to the success of invasive plant management. Further development of the information base will involve new research into the impacts of global warming on invasive plants; gaining a better understanding of which invasive plants have the greatest impact on the B.C. economy and on the environment; and inventory and monitoring projects that map species distribution and identify pathways for their spread. B.C. will continue to support and enhance the Invasive Alien Plant Program (IAPP), an innovative vehicle for all stakeholders to share invasive plant location and treatment information.

Another key objective is to continue piloting innovative programs for invasive plant management, and to gain a better understanding of which treatment methods yield the greatest benefits. Support for programs such as the Corrections Program and the Community Weed Pull Program will be continued, as will support for local weed committees. B.C. will seek funding partnerships to pilot new and innovative programs in areas such as early detection and rapid response systems, prevention, risk assessments and bio-control.

Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

The Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment is an example of government-industry collaboration to resolve contentious issues. The committee is co-chaired by the B.C. Agriculture Council, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Ministry of Environment, and includes farmers and representatives from all of the provincial and federal agencies that play a role in environmental matters affecting agriculture. The committee's vision is to foster a prosperous agriculture sector that strives to be a global leader in environmental and community sustainability. Its objectives are to:

- foster effective communication between industry and government;
- serve as a forum for consultation on agriculture-environment issues;
- find and promote workable solutions to environmental issues affecting agriculture;
- coordinate actions of industry, government and communities to resolve agriculture-environment issues; and
- resolve issues and implement solutions in a timely manner.

III. Building Innovative and Profitable Family Farm Businesses

Government will help to strengthen the industry by placing a greater emphasis on extension, training, research and advisory services, allowing for a reduced reliance on direct government support programs.

Farming was once a way of life for a large percentage of B.C. families, but increased urbanization and shifting economic realities have changed how farming is regarded. While families continue to choose agriculture as a way of life, it is also clearly a business choice.

Agriculture can be a profitable, fulfilling career for both big and small producers. It's not just about creating large corporations or small family enterprises – it's about basic business principles. This is the reality today and the way of the future for a profitable and innovative agriculture sector in a global marketplace, and B.C. farms and agri-food processors can be at the forefront.

Keeping B.C.'s agriculture sector economically viable and sustainable is a key goal of the B.C. Agriculture Plan. We will work closely with all sectors of the B.C. agriculture industry to provide ongoing opportunities for the development of new markets identified at the production, marketing and processing levels.

Management of Business Risk

Strategy 11: Ensure that programs intended to mitigate business risks meet the needs of B.C.'s diverse agriculture sector.

Agricultural production carries inherent risks and uncertainty, which can dramatically affect business viability. B.C. has been actively working with other provinces and the federal government to develop and implement a suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs to provide greater ability for



B.C.'s Top 20 Commodities Ranked by 2006 Farm Receipts

(\$'000)

1	Dairy	395,346
2	Chickens	259,767
3	Floriculture	238,042
4	Cattle	206,485
5	Nursery	156,637
6	Tomatoes (greenhouse)	130,000
7	Mushrooms	81,300
8	Calves	73,224
9	Blueberries	68,000
10	Eggs	67,643
11	Greenhouse Peppers	58,413
12	Potatoes	51,200
13	Cucumbers (greenhouse)	41,584
14	Apples	37,420
15	Hogs	34,391
16	Turkeys	31,932
17	Grapes	29,500
18	Cranberries	28,164
19	Sweet Cherries	21,427
20	Forest Products on Farm	16,534

Source: Statistics Canada

I'd like to see farming that's profitable, so that it affords quality of life for the people involved in it. We need to be producing healthy foods and we need to be environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Del Myers

Vice President of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets and President of the B.C. Bison Association

farmers to stabilize their incomes. The new programs, including AgriInvest and AgriStability, are simpler and more responsive, predictable and bankable.

The province's marketing boards and commissions offer an effective means of managing business risk at both the family farm and processing levels by providing for increased market stability. We will continue to support these systems and to work with the supply-managed sectors in their efforts to ensure that provisions are in place at the national level to meet our industry's needs.

The livestock sectors are currently facing extreme financial pressures due to a combination of unusual market forces (high Canadian dollar, high grain costs, over-supply). While there is no quick fix for these situations, government will work with industry to determine solutions on a sector-by-sector basis.

Sector Strategic Plans

Strategy 12: Implement sector-based strategic plans.

Several commodity organizations have begun developing and implementing sector strategic plans for future growth and development. We will work in partnership with these organizations to implement strategies such as the recently completed B.C. Tree Fruit Strategy. To encourage more sector planning, we will work with the B.C. Agriculture Council and the Investment Agriculture Foundation to identify sectors to be offered funding to develop and implement their own strategic plan in order to work towards sustained profitability for the entire value chain.

B.C. Tree Fruit Industry Strategy

With support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, the B.C. Fruit Growers' Association initiated a long-term strategic planning process in 2006. The objective was to develop a plan that would help the tree fruit sector to be competitive both in B.C. and in the global marketplace. The industry strategy has resulted in packinghouse restructuring, better quality control of packed product, new labour initiatives, industry participation in the school fruit and vegetable program and Eat BCI, expanded promotion of ambrosia in U.S. markets, continuing replant efforts, the launching of new cherry and apple varieties, and the creation of an industry innovation fund.

Taxation

Strategy 13: Review farm property assessment and Provincial Sales Tax (PST) policy as it applies to agriculture.

A Farm Assessment Review panel will be established to undertake a comprehensive review and analysis of the farm assessment regulations. The review is to ensure the property assessment system is fair, equitable and supports farming in B.C. The process will include consultations with the agriculture community and local government throughout the province. We will continue

We enjoy farming and feel that it is a worthwhile adventure. We would like to see more people profit in agriculture, and not by way of developing lands and selling quotas. If there was greater profitability in farming itself, possibly less people would be inclined to turn farmland into residential or commercial buildings.

Alex, Kris, David and Chrystal Thomasson,
Surrey, B.C.

B.C. AGRI-FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS BY INDUSTRY (2006)	
Primary Production:	
Crop Production	3,850
Animal Production	4,642
Support for Agriculture	700
Subtotal	9,192
Manufacturing:	
Food	1,194
Beverage	283
Leather and Allied	75
Pesticide, Herbicide & Farm Products	37
Subtotal	1,589
Wholesale Distributors:	
Farm Products	291
Food	1,752
Beverages	213
Agricultural Supplies	204
Subtotal	2,460
Retail:	
Food	4,179
Beverage	213
Florists	493
Restaurants and Food Service	11,555
Drinking Establishments	769
Subtotal	17,209
TOTAL	30,450

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns

to review the PST policy on an ongoing basis with a focus on streamlining and simplification.

Action Plan for Small Business

Agriculture producers and food processors are faced with a multitude of regulations from all levels of government. The Government of B.C. has been concerned that small business owners, of which many farmers count themselves, are overburdened by regulations that take time and money away from their businesses. Since 2001, the Government of B.C. has reduced the regulatory burden on small business substantially.

In 2006, the Small Business Roundtable recommended a range of further regulatory reforms, including the creation of the Small Business Lens, to minimize the impact on small businesses when introducing a new regulation or changing an existing regulation. The Province adopted this regulatory reform in February 2007, and now applies the lens to all new or amended regulations to ensure that the impacts on small business are known and addressed. The Canadian Federation of Small Business has recognized B.C. as a leader for these initiatives. At the annual general meeting of the Union of B.C. Municipalities in September 2007, local governments also endorsed a resolution to adopt this lens.

The Ministry of Small Business and Revenue's Action Plan for Small Business responds to the 2006 Roundtable recommendations, and sets out a comprehensive strategy to support small business growth and development in British Columbia. The action plan will evolve over time as new issues and opportunities are identified through the ongoing Roundtable process. The October 2007 second annual report of the Roundtable outlines further issues, opportunities, and activities that support small business growth. Through these regulatory reform efforts, farmers and food processors will face reduced regulation and a more streamlined regulatory environment in which to operate.

A long-term lease does not give away society's investment, rather it places it in someone's hands for a period of time at a cost that would provide incentive for young people to be able to get into the agriculture business, build up their capital base by farming or ranching, until a point when they are ready to build. The advantage of long-term is the ability to borrow capital on that kind of a lease.

John Anderson
Merritt, B.C.

Human Resources and Succession Planning

Strategy 14: Assist the agriculture industry with human resources, succession planning and new entrants.

When it comes to labour and succession planning, the agriculture industry is facing challenges similar to other B.C. businesses. Farmers and ranchers must cope with a labour shortage, an aging workforce and the question of what to do with the business when retirement nears.

An aging farm population shows 41 per cent of farmers are at least 55 years old. Interestingly, we have more women involved in agriculture – 36 per cent – compared to the national average. The next 10 years are crucial for B.C.'s farm labour shortage, and will see us competing globally for skilled talent and seasonal farm labour.

We will examine ways of meeting the demand for workers with the requisite skills needed for the

EMPLOYMENT IN THE B.C. AGRI-FOOD CHAIN (2006)

Agriculture and Related Services	32,300
Food and Beverage Processing	24,400
Food Wholesale & Distribution	13,200
Grocery Stores	63,582
Specialty Food Stores	8,770
Beverage and Other Food Stores	5,013
Florists	1,093
Restaurants & Food Service	124,361
Beverage Establishments	10,726
Total	283,445

Source: Statistics Canada

agriculture and food sectors and establishing training programs to fill any gaps. We will review apprenticeship opportunities and explore initiatives to increase productivity and retention.

In collaboration with the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association and WorkSafeBC, we will ensure effective farm and farm worker safety initiatives are in place.

B.C. must find new ways to transfer knowledge between generations, to bring new entrants into farming and ranching, and to plan for succession in order to invest in our future and the continued economic success of the industry. We will work with the federal government to provide succession advice to agricultural producers, and develop courses in the area of business management and marketing skills.



FIELDS FOR YOUR FUTURE
CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

Fields for Your Future is a new promotional program to build an awareness of agricultural careers among secondary students in B.C. There is a general lack of awareness within B.C. high schools about the diversity of career opportunities available in the agriculture industry, and career counsellors have few resources to give students who may be interested. At the same time, the agriculture industry

confirms that they are already having trouble finding qualified people to fill vacant positions. The program focus is on opportunities in the agricultural fields of food, environment, health and economy.

Today's students have a keen desire to succeed and make a difference in their careers, so the program builds on this enthusiasm by focusing on the following messages:

- ◆ Agriculture is more than just production (though it all starts with production).
- ◆ Agriculture is all around us and impacts each of us every day.
- ◆ A career in agriculture can be exciting, challenging and rewarding.
- ◆ Careers in agriculture make a difference in the world.
- ◆ You don't need to grow up on a farm to succeed at a career in agriculture.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, youth and community development programs lead the program with support from B.C. 4-H, the B.C. Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation and the B.C. Youth in Agriculture Foundation.



Innovation, Research and Extension

Strategy 15: Strengthen current extension services.

Strategy 16: Establish an industry-led, self-sustaining agri-food and bioproducts innovation centre.

British Columbia's agriculture and food processing industry must remain innovative and adaptable to varying conditions brought about by climate change, shifting global markets and other events. We will work with agencies and institutions such as colleges, universities, federal research institutions and the private sector to increase innovation, research and non-formal education services known as extension.



We will strengthen the extension services offered through the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands by increasing staff positions and working with other institutions and industry to offer useful and targeted information tools that address the wide-ranging needs of the agriculture sector, including electronic delivery of information through initiatives such as “InfoBasket.”

Innovation is critically important to the future of agriculture. We need to develop a culture of innovation that will lead to improved sector competitiveness, responsiveness, social accountability and environmental sustainability. We will push our partners to implement new initiatives to build on current research efforts underway and support new product developments. We will also continue to work with industry, academia and other agencies to establish an agri-food and bioproducts innovation centre.

Labelling of Genetically Modified Foods

Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) share responsibility for food labelling under the federal Food and Drugs Act. The CFIA is responsible for general food labelling policies and regulations, such as protecting consumers from misrepresentation and prescribing basic food labelling and advertising requirements.

Health Canada’s role relates to its mandate to protect human health and safety. Where safety concerns such as potential allergens and compositional or nutritional changes are identified, special labelling is required to alert the public. Health Canada determines what type of information is needed on the label to inform Canadians about these changes in the food.

Food products derived from genetic modification that are determined to be safe by Health Canada are therefore not required to have any special labels. There is however a national standard in place that provides for labelling of these foods, provided that the labelling is truthful and not misleading. The standard, Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods that are and are not Products of Genetic Engineering, was adopted as a National Standard of Canada in April 2004.

Trade and Inter-Governmental Initiatives

Strategy 17: Partner with the federal government and other jurisdictions.

Agriculture is a shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments, so there are many areas where we work closely with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and other federal agencies. B.C. will continue to stand up for this province’s interests at the federal level and work to establish strategic alliances that can benefit our agriculture and agri-food industry.

In cooperation with other provinces and the federal government, we will work to ensure that the new national policy framework for agriculture will have the flexibility necessary to meet B.C.’s needs.

Forums such as the Pacific North-West Economic Region and the Tri-national Agricultural Accord will continue to be pursued to collaboratively address

agriculture issues of common concern. We will also work within the federal appointment process and with councils that have a mandate on agriculture issues to improve B.C.'s representation at the national level.

As our industry relies on both domestic and export markets, clear rules concerning international and inter-provincial trade and investment are important. We continue to seek a predictable multilateral trade agreement that levels the international playing field and are working to enhance B.C.'s position as the gateway to the Asia Pacific for agriculture and food products.

Keating Farm Community Cooperative

In June 2005 The Land Conservancy (TLC) purchased Keating Farm, an 11-hectare (27 acre) property in the Cowichan Valley of Vancouver Island. The land is in the Agricultural Land Reserve and has significant agricultural potential, although it had not been in production for nearly 15 years.

TLC's goal is to restore and protect, in perpetuity, the site's heritage, agricultural and ecological values. The 1880s heritage farmhouse is being restored and a commercial kitchen will be constructed so the facility can serve as a community events centre and agri-tourism site.

The farmland is being put back into production and is operated by a Keating Farm Community Cooperative. The Cooperative is a legal entity – a business corporation – restricted to 150 members, 5-10 of whom will be producers on the farm, and the remainder of whom will have first option to purchase the products and services from the farm. Members could be individuals, families, businesses, groups of individuals, community organizations, agencies or schools. Members benefit from the satisfaction of having contributed to the protection of farmland in perpetuity and to the security of local food production in the area.

This initiative could also serve as a model to help provide land for young farmers to have a small, successful business without the barrier of today's expensive land costs.

Once a land trust purchases farmland and places a covenant on it to secure it in perpetuity, speculative land prices can be removed as a barrier to sustainable farming. Farmers can lease land at affordable agricultural prices and long-term, flexible tenures for sustainable use.

Larry Bomford
Chair, Keating Farm Community Co-op



We have a lot of potential feed stocks here in British Columbia for value-added products, from our tree fruit industry and the berry industry and the vegetable processing industry, and we also have a high concentration of organic production, and we could be doing a lot more value added with that.

Jan Langton
National Research Council



There are more than 130 wineries in British Columbia, almost double the number of just six years ago, and over 410 grape growers. The B.C. wine industry employs more than 3,000 full- and part-time workers, and by sales, is Canada's number one producer of premium wine grapes.

We will also work with the federal government to clarify labelling regulations and with the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to address the lack of access to products requiring registration under the Pest Control Products Act, particularly lower risk biological products.

Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.: Securing a Future Legacy

The Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia (IAF) is an industry-led, not-for-profit organization, established in 1996 with a mandate to administer federal and provincial industry development programs. These programs assist British Columbia's producers, processors, agribusiness and rural communities to adapt, diversify and grow. IAF works collaboratively with industry and government to address issues faced by the entire B.C. agriculture and food value chain, and to act on opportunities.

Ongoing funding opportunities are available primarily through the federal Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program and joint federal/provincial funding. IAF has also served as the trustee or provided administrative support for a number of significant strategic initiatives in recent years – including the Meat Transition Assistance Program, the Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative, Poultry Industry Biosecurity and the Agriculture Environment Initiative.

Federal and provincial funding to IAF over the past 10 years has exceeded \$100 million, the careful management of which has resulted in additional interest revenue. The Foundation has thereby formed the basis of a future legacy for the British Columbia agriculture and food sectors.

MAL is committed to working collaboratively with IAF on the continued effective management of existing IAF resources, and to build a secure long-term fund available for the future benefit of the B.C. agriculture and food sectors. This will include investing in the strategic initiatives outlined in the Focus on the Future project, which have now been reinforced through the B.C. Agriculture Plan.

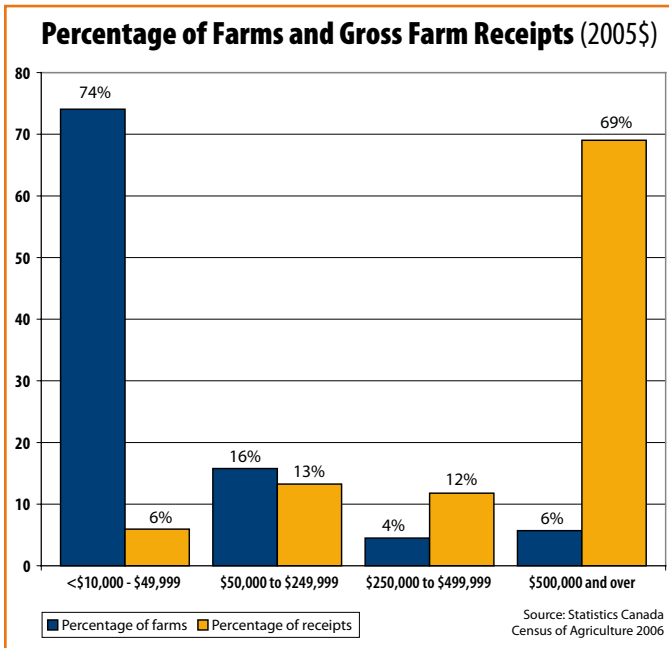
Organics

B.C. was the first province to enact provisions to enable the marketing of certified organic products, and remains a leader in growing and producing organic food products.

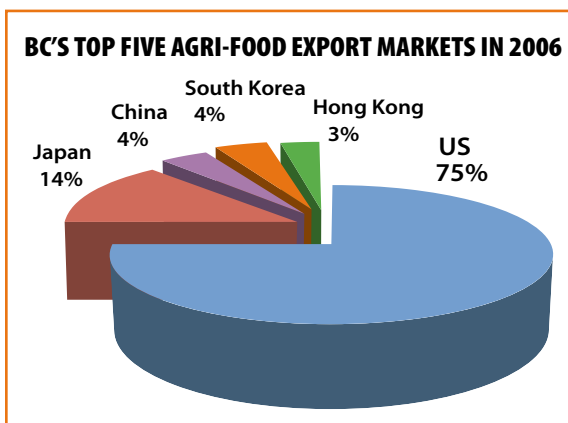
Since 1993, the Certified Organic Associations of B.C. has been responsible for overseeing the B.C. Certified Organic Program, which is established under the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act. The organization accredits specific agencies to inspect and certify organic farms and facilities within B.C.

To meet the needs of B.C.'s wide diversity in agricultural production, there are currently 11 certifying bodies in the province. They provide assurance that products marketed as "B.C. certified organic" are indeed produced under stringent organic standards – regardless of whether they are from an expansive grain farm in the Peace Region or a small southern Vancouver Island vegetable farm.

We will continue to examine opportunities for B.C. to take further advantage of the growing demand for organic food products, at the local, domestic and international level.



Much of the B.C. agriculture sector is export oriented. While exports go predominantly to the U.S., B.C. agriculture and food products are contributing significantly to foreign exchange. Of the total \$1.5 billion in agricultural exports, 37 per cent are fruits and vegetables.



IV. Building First Nations Agricultural Capacity

First Nation farmers participate in many farming activities, including cattle ranching in the Interior, grape growing in the Okanagan and organic market gardening in the Fraser Valley and the coast. Our goal is to further develop the capacity of First Nations people to fully meet the many opportunities provided through agriculture and related activities.

Chief Harold Aljam
President
First Nations Agriculture Association

First Nations will have new opportunities to develop agricultural capacity for healthier communities, increased employment and greater self-reliance.

First Nations derive many of their traditions from environmental stewardship of the land and other natural resources. Agriculture can play a key role in developing communities, while maintaining these traditions.

We are committed to supporting First Nations in achieving economic diversity through agriculture and in promoting the connection between fresh food, health and environmental stewardship. By creating a local, sustainable food system, First Nations can build healthy communities while increasing employment and promoting self-reliance.

We will work with First Nations to help facilitate participation in all of the programs and initiatives identified in the B.C. Agriculture Plan. We will work to expand extension services for First Nations, and will work with community colleges and other public educational institutions to establish effective programs that build skills for First Nations to become more involved in agriculture.

By working with First Nations in collaboration with ActNow BC, other ministries and the federal government, we will continue to develop effective nutrition education programs for First Nations. This includes consideration of an agriculture program in First Nations' schools to parallel similar programs in the B.C. public school system.

Strategy 18: Facilitate First Nations participation in agriculture initiatives.

Strategy 19: Develop programs for First Nations at postsecondary institutions to build agricultural skill sets.

First Nations Community Food Systems

In 2004, the Nuxalk Nation, Bella Coola Hospital, Northern Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands launched a community garden pilot project to study how small-scale sustainable food production could be incorporated into First Nations communities. As a result of this successful pilot, the First Nations Community Food Systems for Healthy Living (CFS) was launched in 2007 involving the First Nations Agriculture Lending Association (FNALA), the B.C. Aboriginal Agriculture Education Council and band councils from 16 First Nations.

CFS supports First Nations in achieving economic diversity through agriculture and in promoting the connection between fresh food and good health. The focus is on building healthy communities by meeting the basic human needs of sustenance using healthy alternatives.

By creating local, sustainable food systems, First Nations can build healthy communities while increasing employment and promoting self-reliance. CFS will result in long term advantages, as developing sustainable and environmentally sound practices will ensure preservation of the land base for future generations.



Canim Lake Band

The Kamloops Indian Band have established a successful forage enterprise, producing hay for their custom cattle feeding operation and for sale to the horse and cattle industry both on and off-reserve.



The Matsqui First Nation have established a successful horticulture enterprise, producing field and greenhouse vegetables for elders and for sale to the local community.



V. Bridging the Urban/ Agriculture Divide

The future of farming in B.C. will be strengthened through a greater awareness of its value to the urban population and new policies targeted to allow generations of farming families to operate viable and integrated farm-related businesses.

Children want to know about their food. They want to know where it comes from. So really, agriculture has to be part of the curriculum, absolutely.

Lindsay Babineau
Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation



Kersley 4-H Club member Emily Tourangeau with her market goat during the show at Quesnel District Interclub Competition August 9-11, 2007.

Cottonwood Kids 4-H Club member C.J. Hall smiles for the beef judge during his junior showmanship class.

There was once a great distance between “the city” and “the country,” but increasing urban populations and sprawling suburban development have brought the city’s borders right up against the farm and past it. The differences in attitudes, lifestyle and priorities of the urban versus the rural, which is commonly referred to as the “urban/agriculture divide,” has become a big issue in agriculture.

The more the public is aware of the importance of agriculture to their own economic and physical health, the more understanding there will be of the needs of local farmers. The strategies being put forward through the Agriculture Plan will increase public awareness and knowledge of B.C.’s agricultural industry. Fostering and encouraging partnerships among stakeholders with divergent interests will also help to garner a broader appreciation for and understanding of agriculture. We will continue to support positive and creative partnerships throughout the agriculture and food sectors, particularly at the local and regional level.

Reconnecting Children with the Source of Their Food

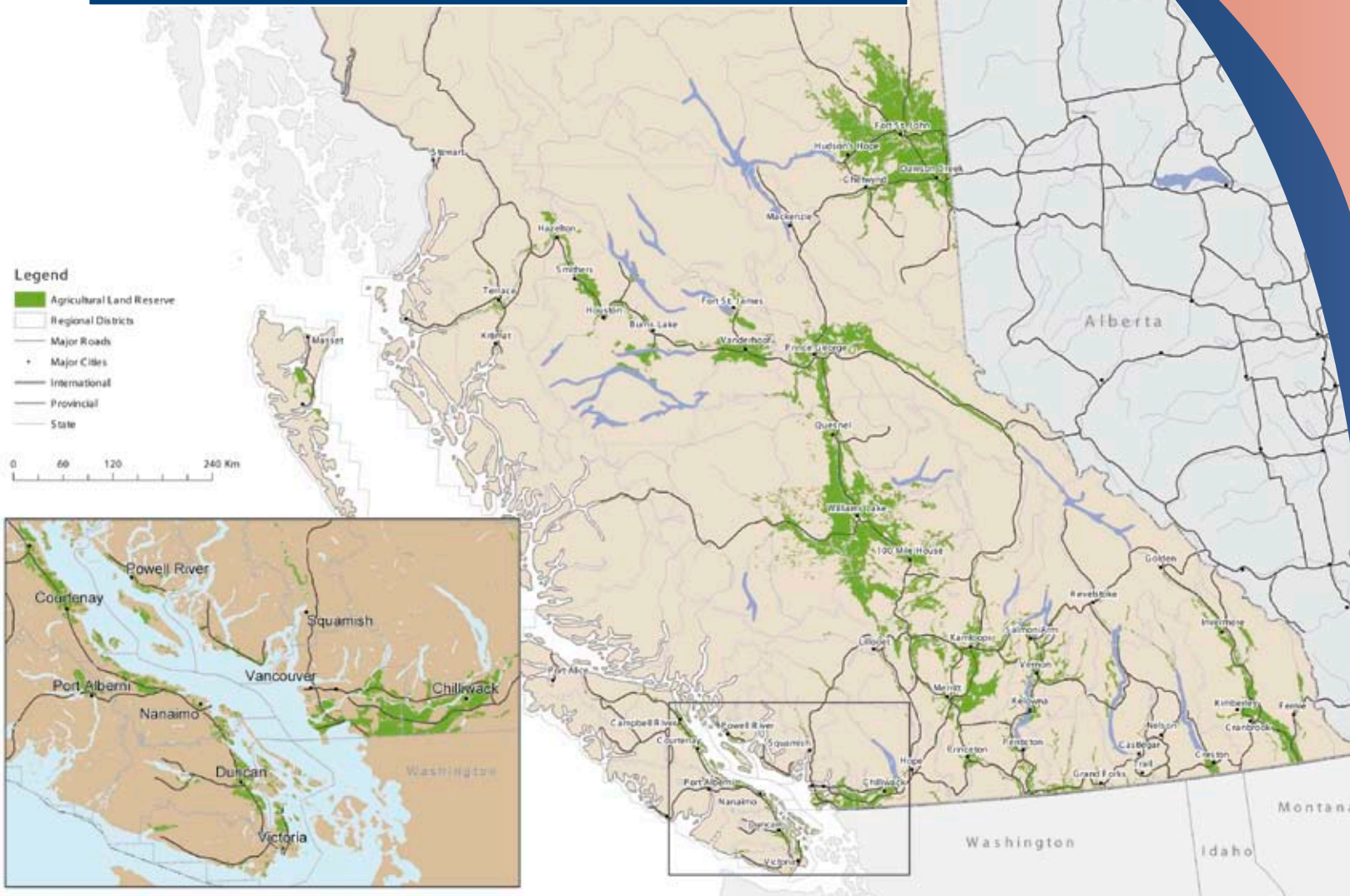
Strategy 20: Increase awareness and interest in agriculture and food among B.C. youth.

There was a time when most youth had some direct family connection to a farm. Even if they did not live on a farm, they often worked on a relative’s farm for the summer. In more recent times, the number of farm families has decreased and this link to farms and farming has been lost. Our goal is to bridge this divide by educating British Columbians about agriculture and the benefits of eating local foods. We will continue our support for Agriculture



in the Classroom and for the 4-H Program and look at other initiatives such as expanding school gardens. These activities connect young people with the land, link urban and agricultural communities together and provide hands-on learning opportunities to the leaders of tomorrow.

Agricultural Land Reserve in British Columbia



Agricultural Land Reserve

Strategy 21: Preservation of agricultural land for future generations of farm and ranch families.

The urban/agriculture divide creates many issues, but first among them is how to use the land. We need our farms to continue to feed a growing population, particularly as more and more people see British Columbia's many positive attributes and choose to make this province their home.

This government firmly believes that the preservation of agricultural land through the Agricultural Land Reserve serves a compelling public interest. We want to protect agricultural land, and particularly prime agricultural land. We also recognize the wide-ranging needs of farm and ranch families with respect to changing production requirements and the intergenerational transfer of farmland. We therefore commit to reviewing the provisions of the Agricultural Land Reserve to ensure it continues to meet our goals of preserving agricultural land over the long term.

I've always said if we look after the farmer, they will look after the ALR and you would have an ALR not an LR.

(Late) David Pendray
Pendray Farms, Sidney

Through the ALR, the protection of valuable and high quality lands near urban centres can be protected. Without this visionary land use policy, current and projected population growth in the large urban centres of the province would have eliminated the possibility of maintaining a diversified agricultural sector in the province.

Lindsay Coulter
David Suzuki Foundation



Netting used to protect blueberry crops from bird damage.



Resolving Farm Practices Complaints

Strategy 22: Implement strategies to minimize conflict between rural and urban residents.

The Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act was enacted to protect a farmer's right to farm in B.C., and sets out the means of resolving concerns and complaints about farm practices associated with dust, odour, noise or other disturbances. The processes in place are intended to resolve concerns in order to let farmers farm, keep people out of court, deal fairly with people's concerns and complaints and deal with poor farm practices when they might occur.

While by far the majority of farm practices issues are resolved without entering into a formal complaint process, the B.C. Farm Industry Review Board does have a mandate to hear complaints from persons who feel aggrieved by nuisances arising from farms. We have strengthened the Act to ensure that provisions are in place for follow-up enforcement of complaint decisions. To help minimize disputes between landowners, we will also institute measures to provide for disclosure of information regarding farm practices when land is being purchased next to agricultural land.

We need public support for an active agriculture –not just for green space that looks nice – so that people can earn a living and contribute to the economy and provide a balance in our economy in the rural areas.

Glen Lucas
B.C. Fruit Growers' Association

Local Government Agricultural Planning

Strategy 23: Increase agriculture industry input at the local government level.

Decisions and actions of local governments can have a significant impact on farming operations. This includes development decisions, planning, bylaws and other municipal measures. To ensure that bylaws, rules and regulations of municipalities and regional governments support the Agriculture Vision, we will work closely with local governments to establish agriculture advisory committees that include industry representation.

Local governments will be strongly encouraged to prepare agricultural plans as part of their Official Community Plans which address urban/agriculture edge issues, transportation, infrastructure and other key topics. We will bring these agriculture advisory committees together regularly to share experiences and work towards common approaches.

By facilitating discussion and sharing opportunities and challenges, each region can continue to foster growth appropriate to their specific needs while at the same time learning from others with shared experiences in British Columbia.

The ALR is a tool for smarter land-use planning – urban development is guided away from rural agricultural lands and towards existing urban areas. (The) main concern with regards to the ALR is keeping it as a tool both for urban containment and food security.

Ione Smith
Smart Growth, B.C.



Conclusion

British Columbia's agriculture industry has a proud history, a vibrant economic present and a promising profitable future. The *B.C. Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families* reflects the values and concerns that the public and farm community voiced to the Agriculture Plan Committee about the future of agriculture in British Columbia. It provides a vision and direction for sustaining and facilitating the growth and diversification of the industry, while playing an important role in climate change mitigation, environmental sustainability and healthy living.

Increasing public understanding of the importance of agriculture and its challenges and needs will help bridge the urban/agriculture divide, raise demand for local, healthy food and contribute to creating a greener environment for future generations. The business of farming needs to be strengthened and streamlined to facilitate growth, bring new entrants into farming and ranching and intensify innovative development of B.C.'s agriculture and agri-food industry.

British Columbia's agricultural future is bright, and this plan will help us achieve our vision:

Continued development and growth of an economically viable and resilient agriculture and food sector which contributes significantly to:

- *the health of British Columbians;*
- *climate change mitigation;*
- *environmental sustainability; and*
- *a growing B.C. economy.*

Drawing by Sydney,
grade 3, Valley View
Elementary School,
Courtenay, B.C.





Appendix A: Implementation of the B.C. Agriculture Plan

These are new and existing actions that the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands is highlighting in its commitment to implement strategies identified in the Agriculture Plan. While the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has taken the lead in implementing the Plan, these action items often involve other provincial agencies, local/regional governments and community and industry groups.

Strategies and Actions	Agencies Responsible	Implementation Timeline
Producing Local Food in a Changing World		
Strategy 1 – Promotion of B.C. agriculture and food products at the provincial and local levels.		
Contribute \$1.0 million/year to promote local agricultural products and develop a B.C. brand.	IAF, industry, MAL	2008-11
Fund with \$1.0 million/year and implement a “Food Miles” project to reduce GHG emissions associated with food purchases.	MAL, industry	2008-11
Expansion and delivery of “Eat BC!” program.	BCAC, IAF, BCRFA, MAL	2009
Strategy 2 – Implement initiatives to strengthen community food systems.		
Support direct farm sales through Farmers Markets Directory (brochure), Farmers Markets Newsletter and Farm Fresh Guides (in four regions).	BCAFM, ActNowBC, MAL, industry, IAF	ongoing
Support Community Food Action initiatives to develop community gardens, organize local farm markets etc.	MAL, MOH, community groups	2008
Support community-led food projects that focus on local production and delivery (e.g. Slow Food, pocket markets).	MAL, ActNowBC, community groups	2008
Work with industry and other agencies to establish a wine and culinary centre.	MAL, BCWI	2008-09
Strategy 3 – Implement initiatives to improve childhood health using B.C. agriculture and food products.		
All public schools will have an opportunity to apply for the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program by 2010. (364 schools to date.)	MAL, MOH, ActNowBC, MTSA, AITC, local governments	2008-11
EatSmart B.C. program (food safety and healthy eating).	MAL, AAFC	ongoing
Support B.C. Farmer’s Market Nutrition Coupon Pilot Initiative.	MAL, MOH, MEIA, BCAFm	ongoing
Strategy 4 – Promotion of human, plant and animal health, and food safety.		
Complete a \$14.5-million Containment Level 3 laboratory.	MAL	2008
Implement the Plant Health Strategy.	MAL	ongoing
Biosecurity program for poultry sectors.	MAL, BCAC, IAF	ongoing

All funding estimates are reported for the three-year period from 2007/08 to 2009/10.

Strategies and Actions	Agencies Responsible	Implementation Timeline
Meeting Environmental and Climate Challenges		
Strategy 5 – Implement initiatives to improve environmental management in the agriculture and agri-food sectors.		
Increase adoption of Environmental Farm Planning program with investment of \$2-3.0 million for 2008/09. (1,994 completed plans to date.)	BCAC, MAL, AAFC	ongoing
Implement options for nutrient management planning as a result of soil nutrient studies.	MAL	2008-09
Investigate value-added options for waste generated by processing plants.	MAL, industry, MOE	2008
Strategy 6 – Implement approaches for farmers to receive benefits for ecological goods and services (EG&S).		
Fund \$4.0 million/year (seeking federal matching funds of \$6.0 million/year) to implement a new Provincial Agriculture Zone Wildlife Program, which will integrate prevention, mitigation and compensation strategies.	MAL, MOE, industry	2008-11
National working group is piloting different tools to enhance the provision of EG&S on agricultural landscapes.	AAFC, provinces, territories	ongoing
Support industry and NGO initiatives to brand products that have been produced in an environmentally sustainable manner.	MAL, industry groups, NGOs	ongoing
Support agriculture in its participation in a Western carbon credit market.	CAS, MAL	2008
Strategy 7 – Address climate change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from food production and processing.		
Support industry initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through new technologies and alternative energies i.e. geothermal.	MAL, industry, MEMPR	ongoing
Facilitate adoption of anaerobic digestion technologies to produce energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from livestock manure.	MAL, industry, B.C. Bio-Products Association	2008-09
Seeking legislative approval for up to \$10 million in funding over three years for biodiesel production.	MEMPR, MAL, industry, MOF	2008-11
Strategy 8 – Integrate needs of agriculture in provincial water management policies and programs.		
Agriculture water committee established to ensure safe, clean and sufficient quantities of water for current and future agricultural uses.	MAL, MOE, Canadian Wildlife Service	ongoing
Engage the agriculture sector in water policy development and support requests for water licensing based on crop and soil needs.	MAL, MOE, MOFR	ongoing
Strategy 9 – Optimize forage production for livestock grazing on rangeland.		
Integrate silvopasture into rangeland tenures.	MAL, MOFR	2008
Strategy 10 – Enhance and coordinate province-wide, invasive plant management.		
Corrections program – seven crews removing priority invasive plants.	MAL, MOFR, MOT, AAFC, INAC, industry	ongoing
Develop information bases and other decision-support tools for effective invasive plant management.	MAL, MOFR, MOE, MOT, IPCBC	ongoing

Strategies and Actions	Agencies Responsible	Implementation Timeline
Regional invasive plant initiatives undertaken by local weed committees (23 total).	MAL, weed committees	ongoing
Build partnerships with stakeholders to develop collaborative strategies.	MAL, MOFR, MOE, MOT	ongoing

Building Innovative and Profitable Family Farm Businesses

Strategy 11 – Ensure that programs intended to mitigate business risks will meet the needs of B.C.'s diverse agriculture sector.

Transfer responsibility for delivery of Agri-Stability program to the Province.	MAL, AAFC	2008
Support supply managed sectors in national and international negotiations to help meet the needs of the B.C. industry.	MAL, BCFIRB, supply-managed commodity boards	ongoing
Work with provinces and the federal government to fully implement the new business risk management (BRM) suite of programs.	MAL, AAFC	2008-09

Strategy 12 – Implement sector-based strategic plans.

Establish process with industry to identify sectors to be offered funding to develop and implement sector plans.	MAL, IAF, industry	2008
Work with industry groups to implement strategic plans already developed (e.g. tree fruit, beef, cranberry).	MAL, IAF, industry	ongoing

Strategy 13 – Review farm property assessment and Provincial Sales Tax (PST) policy as it applies to agriculture.

A farm assessment review panel will consult with the agriculture community and local governments and prepare a report on the farm classification process and assessment regulations for farms in B.C.	MAL, MSBR, BCA, local governments	2008-09
Commit to an ongoing review to streamline and simplify Provincial Sales Tax policy as it applies to agriculture.	MAL, MOF, MSBR	ongoing

Strategy 14 – Assist the agriculture industry with human resources, succession planning and new entrants.

Provide material and staff support to the Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (WALI) to provide a single window approach to employers for the provision of temporary foreign workers.	MAL, IAF, BCAC, WALI	ongoing
Labour strategy being developed that will address longterm HR needs of sector.	MAL, IAF, BCAC, BCFPA	2008
Provide resources and tools to support financial and estate planning and human resource development.	MAL	2008
Work with the ALC, community groups and non-government institutions to develop alternative land use and succession planning models.	MAL, ALC	2008
Work with Advanced Education to establish priorities for agricultural curriculum in B.C. colleges.	MAL, MAE, IAF	2008

Strategies and Actions	Agencies Responsible	Implementation Timeline
Strategy 15 – Strengthen current extension services.		
Coordinate extension efforts with the private sector and other agencies to fill gaps in regional requirements.	MAL, First Nations, universities, colleges	ongoing
Increase extension staff (\$500,000/year). E.g. Summer Extension Assistance Program and “Greenhouse” positions strategy.	MAL	ongoing
Expand crop trials and demonstrations by \$200,000.	IAF	ongoing
Strategy 16 – Establish an industry-led, self-sustaining agri-food and bioproducts innovation centre.		
Work with industry and other agencies to establish a B.C. Food and Bioproduct Technology and Commercialization Centre.	BCAC, BCFPA, government, MAL, UBC, BCIT, UNBC	2008-11
Strategy 17 – Represent B.C. agriculture interests with the federal government and other jurisdictions.		
Pursue change to federal food product labelling to ensure that the best interests of the B.C. food industry can be achieved.	MAL, CFIA, HC	ongoing
Continue active engagement in intergovernmental forums to address agricultural issues such as the upcoming B.C. hosted meeting on agriculture and climate change under the auspices of the Canada/US/Mexico Tri-National Accord.	MAL, PNWER, other countries	ongoing
B.C. is participating in negotiations for the next five-year national Growing Forward agreement on agriculture, agri-food and agriculture-based products.	Provinces, territories, federal government	ongoing
B.C. is seeking a commitment from the federal government to extend the Canada-B.C. Water Supply Expansion Program beyond March 2008.	MAL, EC, industry	2008
Building First Nations Agricultural Capacity		
Strategy 18 – Facilitate First Nations participation in agriculture initiatives.		
Work with First Nations to help identify and develop economic opportunities in agricultural production, processing and marketing.	First Nations, MARR, MAL, AAFC, INAC	ongoing
Delivery of “Local Foods for Healthy Eating” program for aboriginals, including community gardens.	FNAA, ActNowBC, MAL	ongoing
Establish a program to certify First Nations food products prior to 2010 Olympics.	FNAA, MAL	ongoing
Provide First Nations increased access to land for the purposes of agriculture.	First Nations, MAL	2008
Transform community gardens into market-oriented production systems.	First Nations, MAL	2008
Promote formation of “Sustainable Agricultural Development Councils” within the First Nation to provide policy input to Chief in Council.	First Nations, MAL	2008
Support First Nations in building capacity to provide their own extension services.	First Nations, MAL	2008

Strategies and Actions	Agencies Responsible	Implementation Timeline
Strategy 19 – Develop programs for First Nations at postsecondary institutions to build agricultural skill sets.		
First Nations recruitment initiative.	MAL, IAF, BCAC, BCFPA	2008
Support efforts of Gitwagak Band Chief and Council in the establishment of an Aboriginal Agriculture Training Centre.	MAL, First Nations	2008
Work with First Nations and Advanced Education to establish and enhance effective programs for agricultural curriculum in B.C. colleges.	MAE, MAL, First Nations	2008
Bridging the Urban/Agriculture Divide		
Strategy 20 – Increase awareness and interest in agriculture and food among B.C. youth.		
Enhance funding by \$0.1 million to the B.C. Provincial 4-H Council for delivery of 4-H programs to B.C. youth.	MAL, BC Provincial 4-H Council	2008-11
Increase funding by \$0.1 million for agriculture in the classroom programs. (e.g. Agriculture in the Classroom on the Road, Spuds in Tubs, school gardens programs)	AITC, MAL	2008-11
BCAAFE “Award of Excellence” Program for 2010 – supporting fairs and exhibitions.	BCAAFE, MAL	ongoing
Strategy 21 – Preservation of agricultural land for future generations of farm and ranch families.		
Review ALR to ensure the preservation of agricultural land for future generations of farm and ranch families.	MAL, ALC	2008
Strategy 22 – Implement strategies to minimize conflict between rural and urban residents.		
Disclosure of information on normal farm practices as defined in the Farm Practices Protection Act to prospective buyers of lands adjacent to ALR lands.	MAL, ALC	2008
Disclosure of information on existing agreements between landowners and oil and gas companies with regard to future exploration and development activities to prospective farmland purchasers.	MAL	2008
Strategy 23 – Increase agriculture industry input at the local government level.		
Host conferences in major agricultural regions to initiate discussion of how to build on each region’s agricultural strengths and opportunities.	MAL, local governments, industry	2008
Establish agricultural advisory committees with industry representation to provide input into Official Community Plans to address urban/rural edge issues (32 to date).	MAL, local governments	ongoing
Review community plans, zoning bylaws and farm use bylaws to ensure a regulatory structure that promotes the growth of farming in B.C.	MAL, local governments, ALC	ongoing

Glossary:

Provincial Government

ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
BCA	B.C. Assessment
BCFIRB	B.C. Farm Industry Review Board
CAS	Climate Action Secretariat
IGRS	Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat
ILMB	Integrated Land Management Bureau
MAE	Ministry of Advanced Education
MAG	Ministry of Attorney General
MAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
MARR	Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
MCS	Ministry of Community Services
MOE	Ministry of Education
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MEIA	Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
MEMPR	Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFR	Ministry of Forests and Range
MOH	Ministry of Health
MLCS	Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services
MSBR	Ministry of Small Business and Revenue
MTSA	Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts
MOT	Ministry of Transportation

Other Agencies

AAFC	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
AITC	Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation
BCAC	B.C. Agriculture Council
BCAAFE	B.C. Association of Agriculture Fairs and Exhibitions
BCAFM	B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets
BCCDC	B.C. Centre for Disease Control
BCDF	B.C. Dairy Foundation
BCFPA	B.C. Food Processors Association
BCIT	B.C. Institute of Technology
BCLNA	B.C. Landscape and Nursery Association
BCRFA	B.C. Restaurant and Foodservices Association
BCWI	B.C. Wine Institute
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CFIG	Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers
COABC	Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia
EC	Environment Canada
FCC	Farm Credit Corporation
FNAA	First Nations Agriculture Association
HC	Health Canada
HRSDC	Human Resource Social Development Canada
IAF	Investment Agriculture Foundation
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
IPCBC	Invasive Plant Council of B.C.
NRC	Natural Resources Canada
PCAE	Partnership Committee on Agriculture and the Environment
PMRA	Pest Management Regulatory Agency (Health Canada)
PNWER	Pacific Northwest Economic Region
SSFPA	Small Scale Food Processors Association
UBC	University of British Columbia
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia
WALI	Western Agriculture Labour Initiative

Appendix B: Agriculture Links

Government

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	www.gov.bc.ca/al/
Agriculture and Agri-food Canada	www.agr.gc.ca
B.C. Farm Industry Review Board	www.firb.gov.bc.ca
B.C. Infobasket	www.infobasket.gov.bc.ca
Canadian Food Inspection Agency	www.inspection.gc.ca
Provincial Agricultural Land Commission	www.alc.gov.bc.ca

Industry

B.C. Agriculture Council	www.bcac.bc.ca
B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets	www.bcfarmersmarket.org
B.C. Cattlemen's Association	www.cattlemen.bc.ca
B.C. Dairy Council	www.bcdairycouncil.ca
B.C. Dairy Foundation	www.bcdf.ca
B.C. Food Processors Association	www.bcfpa.ca
B.C. Fruit Growers' Association	www.bcfga.com
B.C. Greenhouse Growers' Association	www.bcgreenhouse.ca
B.C. Milk Producers Association	www.bcmilkproducers.ca
B.C. Wine Institute	www.winebc.com
Canadian Federation of Agriculture	www.cfa-fca.ca
Certified Organic Associations of B.C.	www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca
First Nations Agricultural Association	www.fnala.com
Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.	www.iafbc.ca
Small Scale Food Processor Association	www.ssfpa.net

Research and Educational

100-Mile Diet Society	www.100milediet.org
B.C. 4-H	www.bc4h.bc.ca
B.C. Agriculture in the Classroom Association	www.aitc.ca/bc
B.C. Association of Agriculture Fairs and Exhibitions	www.bcfairs.ca
B.C. Farm Women's Network	www.bcfwn.100mile.com
B.C. Institute of Agrologists	www.bcia.com
B.C. Outstanding Young Farmer Program	www.oyfbc.com
B.C. Sustainable Poultry Farming Group	www.sustainablepoultry.ca
Canadian Association of Farm Advisors	www.cafanet.com
Circle Farm Tours	www.circlefarmtour.com
Dairy Education and Research Centre	www.landfood.ubc.ca/dairy-centre/
Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association	www.farsha.bc.ca
Farm Folk/City Folk	www.ffcf.bc.ca
Farmwest	www.farmwest.com
Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre (AAFC)	www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-af-ficher.do?id=1180620561099&lang=e
Soil Conservation Council of Canada	www.soilcc.ca
UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems	www.landfood.ubc.ca

Appendix C: The Committee Process

The Premier of British Columbia appointed Delta South MLA Val Roddick to the newly created position of Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning in June 2005. In February 2006, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands announced that five MLAs would be joining the Parliamentary Secretary to conduct focused consultations with British Columbians on how to further enhance the agriculture industry. The B.C. Agriculture Plan Committee members were:

- ◆ Val Roddick (Committee Chair), Delta South MLA
- ◆ Harry Bloy, Burquitlam MLA
- ◆ Ron Cantelon, Nanaimo-Parksville MLA
- ◆ Al Horning, Kelowna-Lake Country MLA
- ◆ Blair Lekstrom, Peace River South MLA
- ◆ Joan McIntyre, West Vancouver-Garibaldi MLA

The mandate of the committee process, as established in the terms of reference, was as follows:

- ◆ Increasing public awareness, understanding and support of the food production system in British Columbia.
- ◆ Establishing a long-term vision for agriculture that will sustain and facilitate the growth and diversification of the agriculture sector.
- ◆ Encouraging the active participation of First Nations in the agriculture sector.
- ◆ Enhancing the contributions agriculture provides to British Columbia's vibrant economy, environment and quality of life.

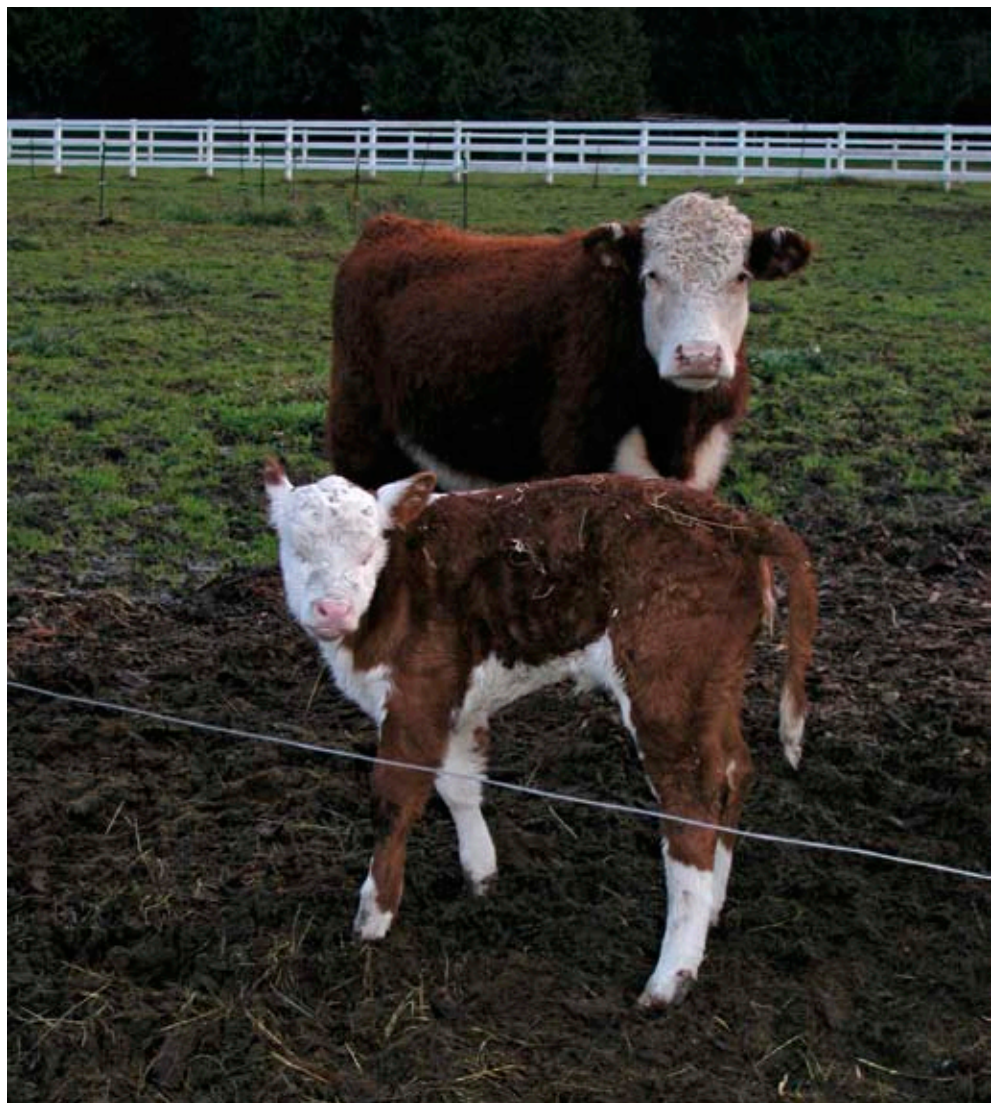
The B.C. Agriculture Plan Committee began its fulsome public consultation process in June 2006. The committee heard from a wide range of stakeholders on their concerns and ideas about the future of agriculture and the food-supply system. The committee travelled the province, holding the following regional public input sessions:

- ◆ Dawson Creek, June 19, 2006
- ◆ Kelowna, June 21, 2006
- ◆ Cranbrook, September 6, 2006
- ◆ Vanderhoof, September 25, 2006
- ◆ Abbotsford, September 22, 2006
- ◆ Williams Lake, September 26, 2006
- ◆ Kamloops, September 28, 2006
- ◆ Granville Island, Vancouver, October 20, 2006
- ◆ Nanaimo, November 21, 2006
- ◆ Sidney, November 22, 2006

In addition, the committee toured over 30 different agricultural operations from across the value chain. Hundreds of written submissions were received through the committee's website, by e-mail and mail. The committee held numerous discussions with agencies from all levels of government including the Union of B.C. Municipalities; producer, processor and retail organizations from across the province; and many other interest groups.

The committee's proposals were then used as the basis for further discussions with representatives of the province's major producer and processor organizations, the B.C. Agriculture Council and B.C. Food Processors Association.

The public forums, meetings and written input resulted in high quality presentations, submissions and briefs that provided invaluable input. The *B.C. Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families* is the synthesis of the ideas, recommendations and insights received.





Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families



Ministry of
Agriculture
and Lands

BC **150** YEARS
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