

**Ministry of
Agriculture**

**REVISED 2011/12 – 2013/14
SERVICE PLAN**

May 2011



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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the Ministry of Agriculture's *Revised 2011/12-2013/14 Service Plan*. This plan outlines how we will support the agriculture and food sectors to grow sustainably and contribute to the well being of the citizens of B.C.

British Columbia is in the midst of an exciting time of change, with a new Premier and a new agenda that includes a focus on families, jobs and open government. The Ministry of Agriculture will support these new priorities by focusing on building innovative and profitable family farm businesses; opening up markets for BC agriculture and seafood exports; and, engaging BC farm families in open consultations about the future agricultural policy framework.

The *British Columbia Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for BC Families* is our roadmap to facilitate growth and diversification of this industry, while increasing public support for the agriculture sector. Since its release in 2008, B.C. has delivered on approximately 90 per cent of the actions that were identified in the Plan. While the Ministry remains committed to the *BC Agriculture Plan*, given the economic challenges facing government, progress on some actions has been delayed as we focus on delivering our Ministry's critical services.

The Ministry is committed to providing strategic investment to help the B.C. beef industry recover from economically challenging times. The Ministry will continue to provide oversight to the implementation of government's response to the Ranching Task Force. We are improving the regulatory and policy environment for the beef industry, working to expand domestic and export markets, and promote the long term viability of the ranching sector.

The Ministry strongly supports the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) and the work done by the Agriculture Land Commission. In the *BC Agriculture Plan*, the Province committed to review the Agriculture Land Reserve to ensure it continues to meet our goals of preserving agriculture land for future generations of farm and ranch families. The government's response to the Ranching Task Force also committed to reviewing the ALR's boundaries, the regulations affecting intergenerational transfers of active ranch operations, and the non-farm use of land in the Reserve. A review of the Agriculture Land Reserve and the operations of the Commission was presented to government November 26, 2010. A priority for the coming year will be to respond to the recommendations contained in the review.

Growing Forward is a five-year national agriculture framework that coordinates federal and provincial agriculture policy. Through *Growing Forward*, government is delivering \$475 million to provide income stability and insurance against losses to B.C. farmers. An additional \$78 million is being invested in a number of programs designed to improve competitiveness and profitability. The current agriculture policy framework expires in 2013. This year, the Ministry will begin to engage stakeholders to help identify issues and opportunities that can be addressed and leveraged under a future framework. Strategic investments in innovation, environmental sustainability and creating new markets that will improve profitability for producers will be key priorities for B.C.

The Ministry will continue to work to expand international markets for B.C. products. Last year, major inroads were made in opening Asian markets to B.C. agri-food and seafood exports. China agreed to expedite the work required to reopen its borders to Canadian beef. China also committed to complete in 2011 the final inspections required to allow B.C. cherries into China and to begin the work necessary to enable imports of B.C. blueberries. Developing relationships with the Chinese and Japanese governments and their industries will be key to growing trade across the region's agriculture and food sectors.

We will also expand our domestic markets so that more B.C. products are found at fairs and grocery stores in our own communities. The Ministry continues to support the development of local food systems in a variety of ways. We are promoting B.C. produce and eating locally by supporting Fairs and Exhibitions; working with the B.C. Agri-Tourism Alliance; supporting Eat and Drink BC, a restaurant and food services association program.

In addition to expanding markets, the Ministry is aggressively investing in innovation. This means sustainable technology, new products, and more efficient and profitable operations. For example, through the federal-provincial AgriFlexibility agreement, we're targeting \$5 million each to both the beef and fruit industries in B.C. This funding support translates into real solutions for our producers and processors, and ensures British Columbia remains a leader in agricultural innovation.

The Ministry will continue to work with industry to build and implement traceability and biosecurity systems so we are ready to respond to animal disease and food safety issues. These systems build consumer confidence and position our agri-food industry to be competitive in both domestic and international markets. Measures to promote food safety, and control plant and animal diseases are essential to achieve a safe, secure food supply.

The Ministry of Agriculture *Revised 2011/12 - 2013/14 Service Plan* was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.



Honourable Don McRae
Minister of Agriculture

April 27, 2011

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Early Morning in Fraser Valley fields

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Agriculture helps the agriculture, food and bioproduct¹ sectors to grow and achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability, supporting the delivery of safe, healthy and high quality food and bioproducts.

The Ministry:

- Delivers programs to stabilize farm incomes against circumstances beyond farmers' control;
- Works to balance urban / agriculture interests;
- Supports a regulatory system and practices that promote environmentally sustainable systems, food safety and socially responsible production practices;
- Monitors and manages the risk of diseases that threaten B.C.'s plant and animal production systems;
- Provides guidance to the sector to increase innovation, competitiveness and profitability to meet consumer demands;
- Supports the agriculture industry to contribute to the green economy;
- Works with other ministries, federal partners and other governments, stakeholders and industry to ensure sustainable marine fisheries; and,
- Supports the growth and development of the seafood sector.

The Ministry relies on inter-agency partnerships such as those with the Agricultural Land Commission and the B.C. Farm Industry Review Board. The Commission is an administrative tribunal and administers the Agricultural Land Reserve, a provincial land use zone that recognizes agriculture as a priority use. The Commission operates independently but is funded through the Ministry. The Farm Industry Review Board is a statutory appeal body with additional responsibilities for the general supervision of commodity boards and commissions in addition to administering the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

¹ Bioproducts are products such as natural health products, biofuels, biomaterials and biochemicals that are made from living, or previously living, material. Examples include herbal products, probiotics, wood pellets, methane gas from anaerobic digestion of agricultural waste, and enzymes extracted from eggs.

The Ministry also partners with other provincial ministries, various levels of government, First Nations, industry, government committees and non-government organizations in terms of funding, collaboration and service delivery. The mandates of these agencies connect in key areas such as climate change, innovation, resource management coordination, food safety and quality, support for local food, commitments to First Nations, invasive plant and pest management, environmental issues and promotion of B.C. agriculture products.

Management and regulation of agriculture is a shared jurisdictional interest of both the federal and provincial government. The Ministry and the industry receive considerable financial support from federal cost-shared programs.

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 32 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the Ministry and a further 73 regulations relating to the Ministry. A complete list of legislation for which the Ministry is responsible is available at:
www.leg.bc.ca/procs/allacts/agric.htm.

Strategic Context

Global Economy and Competition: The Economic Forecast Council estimates that British Columbia's real GDP grew by 3.3 per cent in 2010. The Council projects this rate of growth to slow in 2011, with real GDP expected to increase by 2.6 per cent on the year. The Council then expects BC's real GDP to expand by 3.0 per cent in 2012. Risks to British Columbia's economic outlook include continued economic weakness in the US; the sovereign debt crisis in some European countries threatening the stability of global financial markets; a sudden weakening of the US dollar resulting in significant disruptions to global commodity and financial markets; slower than anticipated global demand resulting in reduced demand for BC's exports; and greater than anticipated moderation in the Canadian housing market.

Over the past several years, BC's agriculture industry has faced significant challenges affecting overall competitiveness and profitability. A stronger Canadian dollar and the rising costs of energy and other inputs have all placed downward pressure on farm income. BC's agriculture and seafood industries also compete in international markets where competitors with similar or lower cost structures enjoy greater economies of scale and create downward pressure on food commodity prices.

Despite these challenges, BC's agriculture industry continues to show steady growth in farm cash receipts and total employment. British Columbia's agri-food industries are an important contributor to the provincial economy, generating close to \$40 billion in total revenues annually and providing more than 315,000 jobs. Agricultural activity occurs in every community in British Columbia, providing a stabilizing influence on local economies.

BC has the most diverse agriculture industry in Canada with more than 225 farm commodities produced locally. In addition, the Province has over 1,400 food processing businesses that produce a wide variety of foods and beverages for the marketplace. The diversity of the agriculture and food sectors provides many opportunities for innovation, value added processing and marketing. Innovation in functional foods, such as the use of reformulated feeds to produce more nutritious dairy products, is just one example of the opportunities presented by adding value in the production chain. Continued industry efforts to diversify into higher value products and new niche markets, supported by government efforts to improve market access, is a strength of the BC industry.

A Focus on Health and Buying Locally: Awareness is growing regarding the benefits of healthier lifestyles and supporting locally produced food which is leading to changes in eating habits and consumer preferences. The diversity of the BC agriculture industry provides unique opportunities to supply fresh, healthy food directly to consumers, while reducing the distance from farm to plate. There are now over 125 farmers markets across the province, representing an increase of over 100 per cent since 2000. These trends create a tremendous opportunity for the sector.

Innovation: The Ministry is increasingly focused on supporting strategic innovation that will benefit the sector and the people of British Columbia. Innovation is the transformation of an idea into a new or improved product, process or service. "Innovation matters. In a globalized world, creating and retaining jobs for Canadians and improving our living standards will increasingly be linked to our

ability to innovate”². Incremental and transformational innovation takes place on a daily basis in the Ministry and the sector. These innovations range from minor improvements to manufacturing techniques that increase efficiency and reduce the costs of production to more fundamental changes in production, such as the use of anaerobic digestors to convert waste into energy and valuable by-products.

Climate Change Adaptation: The Ministry is supporting implementation of the provincial Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, which calls on government agencies to consider climate change and its impacts, where relevant, in planning, projects, policies, legislation, regulations, and approvals, by assessing business risks and opportunities related to climate change. Adaptation is a vital part of government’s climate change plan. It means taking action now to prepare for a changing climate and its impacts on ecosystems, resources, businesses and communities.

Aquaculture: On February 9, 2009 the B.C. Supreme Court found that marine finfish farms on the coast of B.C. are a fishery that falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal parliament. In January 2010 the Province supported the federal government’s move to regulate both shellfish and marine finfish aquaculture. The federal government assumed regulation of aquaculture effective December 18, 2010. The Ministry will retain responsibility for licensing and inspection of fish processing, and some management of commercial fisheries.

Urban / Agriculture Interactions: A large portion of B.C.’s most productive farmland is in close proximity to urban development and other sectors of the economy. Odour, noise and dust concerns, competing demands for existing water resources, growing concern over air quality and emissions, as well as the growing pressures from other sectors to make alternate use of agricultural lands can affect the overall viability of the agriculture sector. The Ministry supports the Agricultural Land Reserve and the work of the Agricultural Land Commission to assist farm families and enhance the sustainability of agriculture in B.C.

Resource Management Coordination The Ministry is working collaboratively with the Ministries of Energy and Mines; Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; Environment; Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; and Jobs, Tourism and Innovation to promote integrated and timely delivery of services to clients in all regions across British Columbia. Such collaboration is designed to support the competitiveness of natural resource enterprises and reinforce sustainable environmental management. Collaborative efforts offer the opportunity for alignment of government resources to advance economic development and community resiliency. Improving the efficiency of service delivery will also help address budget realities and demographic challenges facing the Province.

² Government of Canada (Science, Technology and Innovation Council). *Canada’s Science, Technology and Innovation System: State of the Nation 2008*.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The Ministry's service plan is organized around three long-term goals:

- Agriculture and food sectors contribute positively to the economic diversity and well-being of the Province;
- World-leading environmental stewardship practices in the agriculture and food sectors; and
- Community and social well-being is enhanced by agriculture and food sector practices.

Goal 1: Agriculture and food sectors contribute positively to the economic diversity and well-being of the Province.

Objective 1.1: A sustainable agriculture and food sector.

The Ministry supports sector profitability and self-reliance through programs and services that provide farmers with tools to adapt and sustain their businesses in the face of environmental and market risk.

Strategies

- Promote, deliver and improve national business risk management programs and services.
- Provide strategic business development leadership and build business management awareness, intelligence, and capacity within the agriculture and food sector.
- Improve the competitive environment of B.C.'s ranching sector by implementing and monitoring the four point action plan from the Ranching Task Force.



Farm in Abbotsford, B. C.

Performance Measure 1: Ratio of administration costs to premiums for Production Insurance.

Performance Measure	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Ratio of administration costs to premiums for Production Insurance ¹	22:78	20:80	20:80	20:80

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture.

¹ Administration cost includes both fix and variable costs.

Discussion

The measure indicates the efficiency of delivering the Production Insurance program through government by comparing administration cost to the private sector. In the private sector, administration costs are included as part of premium revenue and generally range between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of total premium revenue. Production Insurance in Canada is delivered by provincial administrations. A ratio of 20:80 means there is adequate administration expenditures to determine coverage, adjust losses, set premiums, and to ensure the integrity of an insurance plan is maintained, while ensuring dollars are available as needed for producers. Production Insurance methodologies in B.C. are certified by an independent actuary.

Objective 1.2: Strategic growth and development of the agriculture and food sector.

The Ministry promotes growth in the agriculture and food sector through programs that foster innovation and improve market access and competitiveness.

Strategies

- Undertake initiatives to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of B.C.’s seafood products in domestic and international markets.
- Assist producers and processors to capitalize on new market share opportunities.
- Support innovative product and process development, commercialization and adoption.
- Enable production and use of renewable energy and development of biorefineries.
- Promote B.C. agri-food products in domestic and international markets.

Performance Measure 2: Annual revenue growth in agriculture, food and beverage sectors.

Performance Measure	2009/10 Baseline	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Annual revenue growth in agriculture, food and beverage sectors ¹	Crops \$1.108 Billion (2009)	1% Growth in farm cash receipts	1% Growth in farm cash receipts	1% Growth in farm cash receipts
	Livestock \$1.297 Billion (2009)	2% Growth in farm cash receipts	2% Growth in farm cash receipts	2% Growth in farm cash receipts
	Seafood \$697.3 Million (2009)	Maintain landed value	Maintain landed value	1% Growth in landed value
	Food and Beverage Manufacturing \$11.818 Billion (2009)	3% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage	3% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage	3% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage

Data Source: Statistics Canada.

¹ Revenue is calculated on the rate of change of the three year moving average.

Discussion:

This measure reflects the growth in annual revenues by the agri-food sector by monitoring growth in the value of farm cash receipts for crops and livestock, the landed value of seafood, and estimated value of shipments from BC food and beverage processors. Revenue growth is an indicator of the contribution of BC's agri-food industries to the provincial economy.

Performance Measure 3: Contribution of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Food to Provincial Primary Sector GDP.

Performance Measure	2009/10 Baseline	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Per cent of Primary B.C. GDP	11.1% ¹ (2008)	0.3% Growth above baseline	0.3% Growth above baseline	0.3% Growth above baseline

Data Source: Statistics Canada

¹ Percentage represents 2008 Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fishing GDP of \$1.287 Billion as a percentage of total primary sector GDP of \$11.584 Billion.

Discussion:

This measure reflects the contribution of the primary agriculture, aquaculture and food sectors to the provincial economy's total primary sector gross domestic product (GDP). Growth in this measure is an indicator of the increasing importance of the agriculture, aquaculture and food sectors to the provincial economy.

Goal 2: World-leading environmental stewardship practices in the agriculture and food sectors.

Objective 2.1: Effective management of environmental risks in agriculture and food sectors.

The Ministry supports the agriculture and food sectors to proactively address environmental risks and the impacts of climate change.

Strategies

- Provide programs and activities to identify and address critical agricultural environmental issues and adoption of best management practices.
- Support local governments, as well as the agriculture and food sectors to prepare for and recover from environmental disasters.



Rainbow over Sumas Prairie, Fraser Valley, B. C.

Performance Measure 4: Number of Beneficial Management Practices projects funded by the Growing Forward Agreement.

Performance Measure	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Number of Beneficial Management Practices projects funded by Growing Forward incentive program ¹	331 ²	200	200	n.a. ³

Data Source: ARDCorp reports and agreements.

1. Canada-British Columbia Growing Forward Agreement (2008-2013), including the Continuity Year Agreement 2008/2009. Access to the Beneficial Management Practices program is via the voluntary and confidential Environmental Farm Plan. Producers must have a valid Environmental Farm Plan to access the program.

2. Based on final report from Delivery Agent April 11, 2011, the actual number of funded (and completed projects) in 2010/11 was 331. In 2009/10, 212 projects were funded, for a total of 543 projects completed since the start of the agreement.

3. No target is available for 2013/14 as there is no agreement in place for 2013/14 that would provide incentive funding.

Discussion

This measure provides an indication, but not a complete accounting, of the response of farmers to environmental risks on their farms. The measure counts the number of farms initiating funded Beneficial Management Practices targeted at specific agri-environmental risk. Program funding is budgeted on a declining level within the Growing Forward agreement. Caps, cost-shares and types of eligible projects are reviewed and adjusted each year of the program.

The projects funded by the Growing Forward incentive program all link to the adoption of beneficial management practices identified in approved Environmental Farm Plans. These projects focus on minimizing the farm impact on water quality, water quantity, and climate change.

Objective 2.2: Sustainable agriculture management practices that assist successful adaptation to climate change.

The Ministry supports the efforts of industry to develop innovative products, tools and processes to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

Strategies

- Promote opportunities for carbon sequestration and encourage improved environmental practice initiatives in agriculture.
- Support the province’s climate change goals by identifying, researching and developing market opportunities for the agriculture and food sector.
- Support improvements in the efficiency of water and energy use by the agriculture and food sector.

Performance Measure 5: Cumulative tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂^e) emissions reduced or averted from actions supported by Ministry programs.

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline ²	2010/11 Forecast	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Cumulative tonnes of CO ₂ ^e emissions reduced or averted from actions supported by Ministry programs ¹	19,000	21,000	25,000	34,000	45,000

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture; Pacific Carbon Trust.

¹ Includes the number of offset tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions retired through the Pacific Carbon Trust each year in emissions reduction projects which can be classified as coming from the agricultural sector, (for example: energy efficiencies recognized in the greenhouse industry); Carbon offsets are measured as one metric tonne of carbon dioxide or equivalent (CO₂^e).

² Based on 2008 calendar year.

Discussion

This measure indicates the success of the Ministry in encouraging agriculture related businesses to implement innovations or practices which reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Pacific Carbon Trust is a provincial Crown Corporation with a mandate to deliver B.C. based greenhouse gas offsets to help clients meet their carbon reduction goals and to support growth of this industry in B.C.

Goal 3: Community and social well-being is enhanced by agriculture and food sector practices.

Objective 3.1: Promote a positive urban/agriculture relationship to facilitate sustainable growth for farms while enhancing the overall quality of life for British Columbians.

Agriculture activity depends on good relations with local government and community members. With only 1.5 per cent of British Columbians living on farms, it has become increasingly important for local government to keep in touch with their farm and ranch communities and facilitate support for the agriculture sector. While preservation of agricultural land in British Columbia is overseen by the Agricultural Land Commission, the Ministry builds on this mandate and aims to create a positive urban/agriculture environment to ensure farmers can continue to farm in farming areas. Agriculture is a key part of sustainable communities.

Strategies

- Promote a positive regulatory climate with local government to support the sector across British Columbia.
- Build a greater understanding of agriculture’s contribution to the community through proactive communication strategies.
- Support the Agricultural Land Commission to fulfill its mandate to preserve agricultural land for future generations of farm and ranch families.
- Expand domestic market opportunities through local food initiatives.



Urban development alongside agriculture region, Abbotsford, B.C.

Performance Measure 6: Number of agriculture area plans completed.

Performance Measure	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Forecast	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Number of agriculture area plans completed	37 ¹	42	48	55

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture

¹ Numbers are cumulative. This includes 26 completed prior to 2009 and 3 more completed in 2009/10

Discussion

This measure provides an indication of how capacity is being built within farm communities to influence issues that affect agriculture. An agriculture area plan focuses on a community’s farm area to discover practical solutions to issues and to identify opportunities to strengthen farming. Key stakeholders prepare the plan, which includes strategies for economic development, joint marketing and processing, agri-tourism and proposals for by-law amendments to support agriculture. The agriculture area plan becomes a subset of the official community plan.

Objective 3.2: Animal, plant and human health are safeguarded.

The Ministry, in partnership with other government agencies, delivers services and initiatives to effectively manage food safety, plant, and livestock health risks contributing to positive public health and to maintaining consumer confidence.

Strategies

- Implement and deliver comprehensive, provincial level programs for animal and plant health that manage the risks of disease and invasive species, and support public health and national programs.
- Support the health of British Columbians by increasing awareness and adoption of food safety programs and practices.
- Continue to work with government and industry groups to identify and implement traceability and biosecurity strategies that will reduce the risk of foreign animal disease incursions and outbreaks.
- Review the province’s animal health policy and legislation to further public health and safety and secure the sector’s market potential.



Animal Health Centre (CL3 Lab), Abbotsford, B.C.

Performance Measure 7: Per cent of routine (diagnostic) animal samples completed within seven working days.

Performance Measure	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2012/13 Target	2013/14 Target
Per cent of routine (diagnostic) animal samples completed within seven working days ¹	85%	83%	85%	87%

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture

¹ Samples tested in-house and not referred to another laboratory. Diagnostic tests require minimum times to complete, depending on the nature of the test.

Discussion

The Animal Health Centre is a fee-for-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory located in the Abbotsford Agriculture Centre. The mandate of the Centre is to diagnose, monitor and assist in controlling and preventing animal disease in British Columbia. Although primarily concerned with food producing animals, the Centre also provides diagnostic services for companion animals, captive and free-ranging wildlife, zoo animals and marine mammals. Submissions are made to the laboratory by veterinarians, livestock producers, government agencies, humane societies, zoos, aquariums and members of the public. The Centre offers a wide range of veterinary laboratory tests on a fee basis to diagnose disease and other causes of poor production or mortality in animals. Samples from wildlife, marine mammal and SPCA investigations are also regularly submitted to the Centre for examination and diagnostic tests.

Resource Summary

Core Business Area	2010/11 Restated Estimates ^{1,2}	2011/12 Estimates	2012/13 Plan	2013/14 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Agriculture Science and Policy	10,960	10,024	10,041	10,041
Strategic Industry Partnerships	36,430	34,556	34,556	34,556
BC Farm Industry Review Board	1,016	896	896	896
Executive and Support Services	6,817	6,821	6,821	6,821
Sub Total	55,223	52,297	52,314	52,314
Agricultural Land Commission	2,088	1,974	1,974	1,974
Production Insurance Account (Net)	11,500	11,500	11,500	11,500
Total	68,811	65,771	65,788	65,788
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	55	3	142	132
Total	55	3	142	132
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
<i>Agriculture Credit Act - Receipts</i>	50	49	49	49
Net Cash Source (Requirements)	50	49	49	49
Total Receipts	50	49	49	49
Total Disbursements	0	0	0	0
Total Net Cash Source (Requirements)	50	49	49	49

¹ The amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the Revised 2011/12 *Estimates*.

² The 2010/11 restated estimates reflect a change in funding model for resource sector operations. Funds previously held in resource sector ministries were centralized into the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the existing service delivery body for these services.

Appendix

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For more information about the *British Columbia Agriculture Plan: Growing a Healthy Future for B.C. Families*, visit the website at: www.al.gov.bc.ca/Agriculture_Plan/

For more information about the Ministry of Agriculture, including full contact information, visit our website at: www.gov.bc.ca/al/