

Ministry of Agriculture

2013/14 – 2015/16 SERVICE PLAN

February 2013



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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



It is an honour to present the *Ministry of Agriculture 2013/14 – 2015/16 Service Plan*.

British Columbians are passionate about food. Our province offers Canada's widest range of fresh and local food products, with more than 200 commodities produced on land and a further 100 from our coastal waters. Agrifoods entrepreneurs continue to choose B.C. as the location for successful business, with their products offering British Columbians everything from attractive local products to artisan-crafted foods, gourmet cuisine and delicacies from around the world.

Whether we are talking about the Okanagan's award winning wine and tree fruit, coastal seafood, dairy, beef, grain from the Peace, berries from the Fraser Valley or specialty cheese from Vancouver Island, my job as Minister of Agriculture is to continue to work with growers, harvesters, processors, and other levels of government to create an operating environment in which the sector can succeed. In this plan, the Ministry presents its goals for the next three years and provides an update on what we're doing to build the province's agrifoods industry.

We will continue to be guided by *B.C. AGRIFOODS: a strategy for growth*. This five-year agrifoods strategy, with its focus on jobs and economic benefits, is part of *Canada Starts Here: The BC Jobs Plan*. The strategy will lead the sector to reach the target of becoming a \$14-billion-a-year industry by 2017, and outlines our plans to encourage innovation, strengthen our domestic and international markets, and ensure a sustainable future for farmers, ranchers, fishers and other agrifoods producers and processors.

One of my first duties after being appointed Minister of Agriculture in September 2012 was to sign a landmark agreement that will promote innovation across B.C.'s agrifoods sector. The signing of the *Growing Forward 2* agreement continued our government's tradition of ensuring the voices of B.C. farmers, seafood harvesters, and processors are heard in Ottawa and that B.C.'s families and the communities that form our agrifoods sector receive appropriate attention and resources from the Federal Government.

This new *Growing Forward 2* agreement will provide key risk management programming to producers who suffer weather related losses, as well as business development programs that reward ideas and help turn them into new dollars for farms and businesses. *Growing Forward 2* will promote innovation and competitiveness in B.C.'s diverse agrifoods sector, and drive the development of new products, processes, markets and job opportunities. By supporting research, business and product development, sustainable agricultural management and food safety programs, the B.C. government is working to create sector-wide benefits, employment and growth.

An innovative and competitive agrifoods sector will continue to provide British Columbians with fresh local foods, and create opportunities for others to join the 61,000 men and women already employed in the sector. Our Buy Local program is investing \$2 million to help B.C. producers and processors promote their products to British Columbians. The funding supports local businesses and

organizations as they launch or expand their marketing campaigns, and allows B.C.'s diverse food industry to use customized promotions specific to their market and needs.

B.C. foods are enjoyed here at home, across the country and around the world. B.C. typically exports about \$2.5 billion a year to more than 140 countries, and we will continue our targeted efforts to build trade with growing Pacific economies. Our international reputation for high-quality and high-value products and our partnership with industry to reach new markets is getting results. B.C. has set record exports to China in each of the last two years through a strategic approach that builds relationships with stakeholders there, and introduces them to the quality of B.C. foods. As Canada's gateway to the Pacific, B.C. is uniquely positioned to supply developing food markets in Asia as well as traditional markets in Canada, the United States and Europe, and that's something we are taking advantage of.

There is nothing more important than ensuring our foods are produced following strict safety protocols so families both here at home and around the world can continue to enjoy B.C. food with confidence. As our government introduces a new meat inspection program for provincially inspected abattoirs, those founding principles of safety and quality will be paramount. The new program will also support meat producers and processors and build on the growing demand for local meat products.

It is an honour to be appointed the Minister of Agriculture, a sector in which much has been done, yet there is much more to do. I look forward to continuing to be a strong advocate for our hard working agrifoods industry as the Minister *for* Agriculture.

The *Ministry of Agriculture 2013/14 – 2015/16 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 Norm Letnick
Minister of Agriculture
February 7, 2013

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B.C. chicken with berries and greens.



Early Morning in Fraser Valley fields

Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Agriculture (the Ministry) supports an innovative, adaptive, globally competitive and socially and environmentally responsible agrifoods sector valued by all British Columbians. The Ministry's support of healthy and safe agrifood and seafood production and post-production processing provides new and value-added products for domestic and international markets, contributing to B.C. jobs and the economy as well as to diversified rural communities.

The Ministry champions the agrifoods sector by:

- Supporting practices that promote adaptable, sustainable and competitive agrifoods production;
- Ensuring, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Federal Government, a regulatory system that promotes animal and plant health and food safety;
- Delivering programs to stabilize farm incomes when threatened by circumstances beyond farmers' control to ensure continued long-term production;
- Providing guidance and funding to the sector to increase market development;
- Supporting the agricultural industry's contribution to the green economy;
- Working with other ministries, federal partners and other governments, stakeholders and industry to ensure sustainable marine fisheries; and
- Working to balance urban / agricultural interests.

The Ministry relies on interagency cooperation with organizations such as the Agricultural Land Commission and the BC Farm Industry Review Board. The Agricultural Land Commission is an administrative tribunal that oversees the Agricultural Land Reserve, a provincial land-use zone that recognizes agriculture as a priority use. The Agricultural Land Commission operates independently but is funded through the Ministry. Similarly, the BC Farm Industry Review Board is an

administrative tribunal funded by the Ministry but which operates independently as the general supervisor of commodity boards and commissions and in hearing regulated marketing appeals, grading appeals, farm practices complaints and conducting farm practices studies.

The Ministry also collaborates with the Federal Government, other provincial ministries, local governments, First Nations, industry and non-governmental organizations in terms of funding and service delivery. The mandates of these bodies connect in a variety of key areas such as trade, climate change, innovation, resource management coordination, food safety and quality, support for local food, commitments to First Nations, animal and plant health, pest management, environmental issues and promotion of B.C. agrifoods products.

Management and regulation of agriculture is a shared jurisdictional interest of both the Federal and Provincial governments. The Ministry and the industry receive considerable financial support from federal cost-shared programs. The next Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial agricultural policy framework agreement, *Growing Forward 2*, is expected to bring about \$255 million of Federal funding to the Province between April 1, 2013 and March 31, 2018. Business Risk Management programming is expected to account for about \$186 million of the funding, depending on program demand. The remaining \$69 million will support Strategic Initiative programming. These Strategic Initiative funds target sector innovation, competitiveness, access to markets, adaptability and industry capacity.

Management and regulation of capture fisheries and aquaculture is a shared jurisdictional interest of both the Federal and Provincial governments. The Federal government has primary responsibility for the conservation of wild fish stocks and appropriate management of wild fisheries and aquaculture, both finfish and shellfish. The Ministry interests have a twofold focus – ensuring sustainability of fisheries and environment, and for maximizing the economic and social benefit of fisheries for the people of B.C. The Ministry works with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to ensure appropriate fisheries management practices which support a sustainable industry, and works closely with industry to encourage sector innovation, competitiveness and market access. The Ministry also cooperates with other Federal and Provincial agencies on food safety issues, and environmental protection.

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the Ministry includes 31 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.



Farm in the Fraser Valley, B.C.

Strategic Context

The Ministry of Agriculture works to promote an innovative, adaptive and globally competitive agrifoods sector for the benefit of all British Columbians. The agrifoods sector- which includes agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and processing- is an important and successful contributor to the B.C. economy, and has responded vigorously to challenges and opportunities. While much has been accomplished, there is still more to do as new markets, products, competitors and issues impact the sector. The Ministry continues to work with the sector to support its competitiveness and viability.

Ministry staff, including the BC Farm Industry Review Board and the Agricultural Land Commission, number over 300. This includes veterinarians, microbiologists, virologists, Professional Agrologists and Engineers, planners, production and food science/processing industry specialists, business analysts and economists, as well as an array of other technical, business, administrative and financial experts. The workplace strategies in the Natural Resource Sector Technology and Transformation Plan 2012/13 complement staff mobility, flexibility and responsiveness. As a natural resource focused ministry, staff combine on-site field observations and client contact, research, knowledge and their professional training and judgment to identify opportunities and avoid or mitigate risks. Increased access to data and new equipment accelerates sharing of insights from fieldwork, research and analyses. The new Containment Level 3 lab in Abbotsford, for example, speeds B.C.'s time-critical analyses of samples that would otherwise have to be sent out of province. Similarly, specialist staff develop spatial information identifying the types of agricultural production, part of the foundation for local government agricultural planning processes.

The following section provides a summary of some external factors and trends affecting the Ministry's activities.

Global economic outlook

The Economic Forecast Council estimates that British Columbia's real GDP grew by 2.1 per cent in 2012 and projects that the rate of real GDP growth will remain at 2.1 per cent in 2013, before increasing to 2.5 per cent in 2014. Risks to British Columbia's economic outlook include: a return to recession in the US; the European sovereign debt crisis threatening the stability of global financial markets; slower than anticipated economic growth in Asia dampening demand for BC exports; and a weakening of the US dollar disrupting the financial markets and raising the cost of BC exports abroad.

National and Provincial Factors

By 2030, Canada is expected to be one of only a handful of countries exporting more food than it imports. In 2010, B.C. agricultural and seafood exports went to 135 countries and represented \$2.5 billion in economic activity in B.C. This means growing opportunities for the province. B.C., as Canada's Pacific Gateway, has opportunities to export more agrifoods products and increase its economic return to the province. B.C.'s advantages include the diversity of its agrifoods commodities.

Over the past several years, B.C.'s agrifoods sector has faced several changes affecting its competitiveness and profitability. A strong Canadian dollar and the high costs of energy and other

inputs have placed downward pressure on the agrifoods sectors. The sector competes in international markets where Canada is now negotiating bilateral and multilateral agreements. International and national competitors, with similar or lower cost structures and larger economies of scale, will likely continue to squeeze profit margins for B.C.'s producers and processors. In the agrifoods sector, where over 85 per cent of the seafood is destined for the export market, there is a strong focus on maintaining access and competitive advantage in global markets, necessitating quick responses to changing market opportunities. In 2011, B.C.'s agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and processing sectors



B.C. seafood is sought after in local, Canadian and international markets. Here, Premier Christy Clark promotes B.C. seafood in Asia.

provided almost 61,000 jobs and \$10.9 billion in annual revenue. This is building to the 2017 target of \$14 billion of annual revenue. The nearly 20,000 farms had total farm gate receipts of \$2.6 billion in 2011, and offered 26,100 jobs. The 745 aquaculture operations contribute \$465 million in farm gate sales, while sales from the 2700 commercial fishing vessels were \$345 million, and offered a combined total of 4100 jobs. The 1400 processors handled a wide range of agricultural and seafood products, employed an estimated 30,300 people and generated nearly \$7.5 billion in sales.

During this period of fiscal restraint, the Ministry of Agriculture will make all efforts to reduce administrative and discretionary costs in order to achieve its savings targets without impacting direct services. Expenditure management controls are in effect and will be in place until the fiscal forecast improves.

Completion of the *Growing Forward 2* Federal/ Provincial / Territorial agreement will provide joint Canada / B.C. funding for strategic initiatives and business risk management programming for B.C.'s agrifoods sector. To maximize the strategic benefits of this funding, the ministry's operations are guided by the *2012 B.C. AGRIFOODS: a strategy for growth*, which includes an emphasis on employment and the economic importance of the sector. The agrifoods strategy is part of *Canada Starts Here: The BC Jobs Plan*.

Business Risk Management programs are in place to help farmers manage risks from income declines resulting from causes such as drought, flooding, low prices, and increased input costs. The programs work together by providing protection for different types of losses, as well as cash flow options.

There are four cost-shared programs, described here: First, AgriInvest helps cover small income declines and allows for investment that help mitigate risks or improve market income; second, AgriStability provides short term benefits when there are large declines in the margin between revenue and operating expenses caused by circumstances such as significant market fluctuations in commodity prices or input costs; third, AgriInsurance offers protection against production losses for specific crops caused by weather events and other natural hazards such as hail, drought, flooding or disease; and fourth, AgriRecovery provides disaster assistance to help farmers cover extraordinary costs required to return their businesses to production.

In addition, the Advance Payments Program is a complementary federal-only program to help crop and livestock producers with cash flow and to provide flexibility for marketing of commodities.

Capitalizing on B.C.'s reputation for safety and quality



The Abbotsford Agriculture Centre's Animal Health Centre provides valuable necropsy services for the sector.

B.C. has an enviable reputation as a leader in the production and processing of a wide range of safe, high-quality agrifoods products.

Currently, the Ministry of Health contracts with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to deliver meat inspection services for provincially inspected abattoirs.

Effective January 1, 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture, on behalf of B.C., will assume responsibility for delivery of a new, provincially-operated meat inspection system in the province. This system, with meat product safety as its top priority, will support producers and processors and meet local demand for meat products.

Growing focus on buying locally produced products

B.C. enjoys a domestic market driven by the largest population of the four western provinces. Growing support in B.C. for locally produced food is leading to changes in eating habits and consumer choices. These changes have contributed to the number of farmers' markets across B.C. increasing from about 100 to almost 150 with total direct sales also increasing by approximately 150 per cent between 2006 and 2012. Local seafood is available through many farmers' markets as well as through dockside sales in coastal communities. Buying locally produced products, either at farmers' markets or retail stores, not only reduces the distance food travels from farm to plate, but also reduces transportation costs and greenhouse gas emissions. It also supports families involved in the production, harvesting and processing sectors and strengthens the future of the agrifoods sector provincially.

Increasing Innovation

Innovation leads to tangible benefits for producers, processors and the citizens of B.C. An innovative sector is one that continually develops and adopts new products and practices to remain competitive and sustainable. Focused investment in innovation can increase productivity, reduce costs, advance sustainability and lead to the development and commercialization of new



B.C. kiwis are a relatively recent addition to the over 200 agricultural commodities produced in B.C. Local production, of what was previously an import, gives consumers a local option.

products, processes and practices that will make the sector more competitive.

Since B.C. is a relatively small producer in the global trading arena, commodity pricing for seafood and agrifood is led by much larger producers. As a result, innovation- including new product development- is very important in establishing and servicing niche markets and responding to market opportunities for B.C.'s agrifoods.

Urban / Agricultural Interactions

A large portion of B.C.'s most productive farmland is near urban development. This can lead to tensions over odour, noise and dust as well as competing demands for water. The Ministry works with producers and communities through the Strengthening Farming Program to address a range of conflicts. The Farm Industry Review Board also hears complaints and provides impartial resolution to disputes related to these issues. The Agricultural Land Commission assists farm families and contributes to the sector's overall sustainability by ensuring that land is retained in the Agricultural Land Reserve and that appropriate use is made of land in the reserve.

Resource Management Collaboration and Coordination

When Government's structure to manage Crown land and natural resources was reconfigured in the spring of 2011, it created an improved arena for coordination and integration. The ministries involved include: Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; Agriculture; Energy, Mines and Natural Gas; Environment; Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations; and Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training. Under the direction of the Natural Resource Board, these ministries are making bold changes to service delivery in the natural resource sector. This sectoral approach promotes streamlined authorization processes and enhanced access to public services across the province. The reconfiguration facilitates more consistent engagement and consultation with industry, stakeholders, partners and clients. It also enhances inclusion of Aboriginal, economic and environmental considerations into decision making. The ministries are working together to make these improvements and meet the commitments of the [BC Jobs Plan](#).

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation remains responsible for the overarching Crown-First Nations relationship as well as consultation policy, and supports all natural resource sector ministries on strategic consultation issues such as proposed policy or legislative changes. Through its New Relationship with First Nations, this Ministry along with government as a whole remains committed to constructive consultation with Aboriginal peoples on socio-economic issues and opportunities.

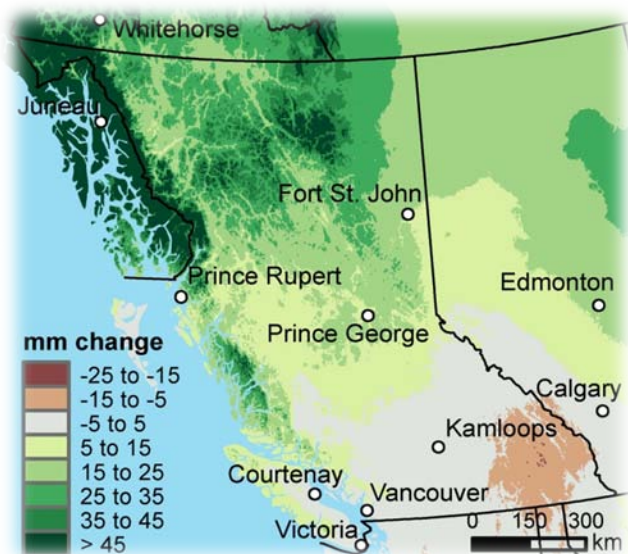
The Ministry will work with the Ministry of Environment on the review of the Agricultural Waste Control Regulation, the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation and the Packaging and Recycling Regulation over the next year. The Ministry also expects to continue to provide agricultural perspectives to the Agricultural Water Committee through fiscal 2013-14. This Committee



Aerial view of farming in the Fraser River Delta

includes the BC Agriculture Council and provides input into the Ministry of Environment's *Water Act* Modernization process. The severe drought conditions in many of the US states in 2012 and predictions of changes in B.C.'s future precipitation levels are reminders of the agricultural sector's vulnerability to climate change and the importance of climate change adaptation and mitigation in our Ministry.

Collaboration of the Natural Resource Sector ministries reinforces sustainable environmental management, and can promote the creation of family-supporting jobs. The Natural Resource Sector ministries cooperate in emergency management, such as managing livestock evacuation during floods or fires. Improving the efficiency of service delivery will also help address the budget realities and demographic challenges facing the Province. Similarly, significant interaction takes place between Natural Resource Sector ministries during natural gas exploration and removal near or on farmland.



B.C. summer precipitation change expected in the 2050s based on 1961-1990 baseline precipitation. Courtesy: Climate Impacts Consortium

The Ministry works closely with Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding aquaculture and commercial harvesting to ensure the sustainability and maximum economic value of fisheries.

Recommendations from the October 2012 report of the Cohen Commission inquiry into sockeye levels in the Fraser River are being examined by the Ministry. Agriculture staff, in consultation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, will develop

a response to the report's recommendations. The Ministry also works with B.C. agencies to maintain a healthy environment for fisheries, and address issues such as discharge from processing facilities and urban sewage.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

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

- **Goal 1:** Agricultural and food sectors contribute positively to the economic diversity and well-being of the Province;
- **Goal 2:** An environmentally responsible agrifoods sector; and
- **Goal 3:** Community and social well-being are enhanced by responsible agricultural and food sector practices.

The Ministry is committed to supporting government's key priorities for families, jobs and the economy, and open government. Part of this involves implementing the agrifoods strategy, which is part of the *Canada Starts Here: The BC Jobs Plan*. The Ministry worked with industry to develop this strategy, launched in March 2012, to leverage opportunities and accelerate growth in the agrifoods sector. As part of the commitment made under the *BC Jobs Plan*, the Ministry commissioned a special report to identify opportunities for growth and innovation in the greenhouse industry and is following up on the resulting recommendations.



Lean B.C. pork with roasted vegetables

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

Objective 1.1: A sustainable agricultural 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, market intelligence, and capacity within the agricultural and food sector.
- Continue to implement and monitor the recommendations of the Ranching Task Force to improve the competitive environment of B.C.'s ranching sector.



Ranching is an important component of the B.C. agrifoods sector.

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

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Ratio of administrative costs ¹ to Production Insurance premiums	20:80	20:80	20:80	20:80

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture.

¹ Administrative costs include both fixed and variable costs.

Discussion

This measure indicates efficiency of government's delivery of the Production Insurance program by comparing administrative cost ratios to the private sector's. Production Insurance in Canada is delivered by provincial administrations.

Production Insurance administrative costs vary widely between provinces. Provinces with diverse types of crops and relatively low farm cash receipts, such as B.C., tend to have relatively higher program costs than do provinces with homogeneous crop production and higher farm cash receipts. The value of the crops produced is also significant when considering administrative costs. Production Insurance, as with all insurance, must incur administrative costs to protect the program from abuse and adverse selection. Failure to do so results in high claim rates which cause higher producer premiums and overall program costs. At the national



Ministry staff members regularly evaluate field conditions across the province. Here staff members are looking at the impact of wildlife on a creeping red fescue stand in the Peace.

level, three different administrative cost measures are used for comparative purposes: administrative costs to premiums received; administrative costs to value of coverage; and administrative costs per contract.

B.C. has selected to report internally against a ratio of administrative costs to premiums, with a target of 20:80. B.C. selected this ratio because it is most comparable to the private sector. The private sector ratio for most insurance products ranges between 25 and 30 per cent. The target represents an appropriate balance for B.C. between efficiency and resource requirements to protect the integrity of the program.

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

The Ministry promotes growth in the agricultural and food sector through programs that foster innovation, competitiveness and improved market access.

Strategies

- Expand domestic and international markets for B.C. agrifoods products.
- 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 technology adoption.
- Enable production and use of renewable energy and development of biorefineries.



Some of B.C.'s 2,700 fishing vessels which harvest fresh seafood

Performance Measure 2: Annual revenue growth in agrifoods industry.

Performance Measure	Baseline ¹ 2011	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Annual revenue growth in agrifoods industry ³	Farm Cash Receipts ² \$2.625 billion	2% Growth in farm cash receipts	2% Growth in farm cash receipts	2% Growth in farm cash receipts	2% Growth in farm cash receipts
	Seafood \$0.810 billion	5% Decline in landed value	Maintain landed value	Maintain landed value	Maintain landed value
	Food and Beverage Manufacturing \$7.454 billion	1% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage	2% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage	2% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage	2% Growth in value of shipments for food and beverage

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Cansim Tables 002-001 and 003-001

¹ For consistency, revenue growth is calculated using the actual published 2011 revenues rather than the three year average used in the 2012/13 – 2014/15 Service Plan.

² Farm cash receipts include crop and livestock receipts as well as direct payments to the sector.

³ The agrifoods industry includes agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and processing/manufacturing

Discussion:

This measure reflects the growth in annual revenues by the agrifoods sector by monitoring growth in the value of farm cash receipts for crops and livestock, the landed value of seafood, and the estimated value of shipments from B.C. food and beverage processors. Revenue growth is an indicator of the contribution of B.C.’s agrifoods industries to the provincial economy. Targets are based on the average annual rate of change in revenues. Since these revenues are driven by market conditions, they are not wholly under the Ministry’s control.



Fruit and vegetable packaging and processing are critical to ensuring high-quality B.C. product reaches consumers in top condition.

Goal 2: An environmentally responsible agrifoods sector.

Objective 2.1: Sustainable management of British Columbia’s soil, water and air resources for agrifoods production and processing.

The Ministry supports the agrifoods sector 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 enable adoption of best management practices supporting environmentally responsible production. For example, the Agriculture Water Demand Model will be expanded to additional areas of the province in 2013/14 to help ensure adequate water supply for food production.
- Support local governments, as well as the agricultural and food sectors to respond to and recover from environmental disasters.
- Work with commercial fishing industry to maintain and expand world standard eco-certification, such as that set by the Marine Stewardship Council.



Ministry staff member provides technical information on soil management on farm in the Fraser Valley, B.C.

Performance Measure 3: Cumulative and annual number of Environmental Farm Plans completed.

Performance Measure	2012/13 Base	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Cumulative number of Environmental Farm Plans ¹	3700 ²	3950	4175	4375
Annual number of Environmental Farm Plans completed	N/A	250	225	200

Data Source: Agricultural Research and Development Corporation reports and agreements.

¹ Canada-British Columbia *Growing Forward* Agreement (2008-2013) and *Growing Forward 2*, (2013-2018).

² The 2012/13 Base data are made up of the cumulative number of completed Environmental Farm Plans.

Discussion

This measure provides an indication of the response of farmers to environmental opportunities and risks on their farms. An Environmental Farm Plan is a voluntary, confidential assessment of opportunities to enhance environmental operations of B.C. farms and ranches. An assessment is conducted by the farm/ranch operator with the assistance of a trained planning advisor. The performance measure is the cumulative number of completed Environmental Farm Plans. These assessments are a pre-requisite to accessing funding to implement Beneficial Management Practices targeted at specific agri-environmental situations.

Note that previously, Performance Measure 3 was the number of completed Beneficial Management Practices. The number of completed Environmental Farm Plans has now replaced the number of completed Beneficial Management Practices. The plans/assessments are considered to more accurately reflect the outcome than are the Beneficial Management Practices.



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

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

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

Strategies

- Promote opportunities for reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions and encourage improved environmental practice initiatives in the sector, which is striving to become more carbon-neutral.
- Support the province's climate change goals by identifying, researching and developing market opportunities for the agrifoods sector, including development and use of new products that will thrive in the new climatic regime.
- Support improvements in the efficiency of water and energy use by the agrifoods sector.
- Encourage industry response to changes in abundance and distribution of capture fisheries through new emerging capture and aquaculture fisheries.



Ministry staff member collects a soil sample from a corn field in the Fraser Valley as part of the 2012 Fraser Valley Soil Nutrient Study.

Performance Measure 4: Cumulative and annual reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions arising from actions supported by Ministry programs.

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline ²	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Cumulative reduction in CO ₂ or CO ₂ e emissions resulting from actions supported by Ministry programs ¹	19,000	34,000	45,000	50,000	55,000
Annual reduction in CO ₂ or CO ₂ e emissions resulting from actions supported by Ministry programs	N/A	15,000	11,000	5,000	5,000

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture; Pacific Carbon Trust.

¹ Includes the number of offset tonnes of carbon dioxide or 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 (CO₂e).

² Based on 2008 calendar year.

Discussion

This measure indicates the success of the Ministry in encouraging farms to implement innovations or practices which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Beneficial Management Practices contribute to CO₂e reductions and are funded under *Growing Forward*. Caps, cost-shares and types of eligible projects are reviewed and adjusted annually.

Beneficial Management Practices will only qualify for *Growing Forward 2* funding if they are identified in approved Environmental Farm Plans (see Performance Measure 2). These projects focus on minimizing farm impact on water quality and quantity, energy use and climate change issues such as greenhouse gas production. Examples of Beneficial Management Practices include the installation of thermal curtains in greenhouses to reduce heat loss and CO₂e production and the change in type of equipment used, which can reduce fuel consumption and contribute to CO₂e savings.



Beekeepers are shown here with their bees. Healthy bees are critical to agricultural production.

Changes in ocean conditions are evident in the changes in abundance and distribution of wild fish populations. Fostering industry responsiveness to new and emerging capture fisheries and aquaculture opportunities enables B.C. to develop and diversify seafood products.

Goal 3: Community and social well-being are enhanced by responsible agricultural and food sector practices.

Objective 3.1: Promote a positive urban / agrifoods relationship to facilitate sustainable production for farms.

Agricultural 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 governments to keep in touch with farm and ranch communities to help facilitate support for the agricultural sector. The Ministry, for example, is conducting work on vegetative borders to intercept dust from barn exhaust fans to reduce impacts on neighbours.

Preservation of agricultural land in British Columbia is overseen by the Agricultural Land Commission, and the Ministry supports the Agricultural Land Commission's work by promoting a positive urban / agricultural environment to ensure farmers can continue to farm in farming areas.

Strategies

- Promote a positive regulatory climate with local governments to support the agrifoods sector across B.C., in part by establishing standards to guide local government bylaw development in farming areas.
- Build a greater understanding of agriculture's contribution to communities through proactive, province-wide communication strategies.
- Support the Agricultural Land Commission's work to fulfill its mandate to preserve agricultural land for future generations of farm and ranch families.
- Support local food initiatives to promote B.C. products domestically.
- Provide information to inform Provincial and Federal agency decisions regarding siting and operation of aquaculture facilities.



Urban development alongside an agricultural area, Comox-Strathcona, Vancouver Island, B.C.

Performance Measure 5: Number of Agricultural Area Plans completed.

Performance Measure	2012/13 Base	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Cumulative number of Agricultural Area Plans completed	52	59	65	70
Number of Agricultural Area Plans completed per year	N/A	7	6	5

Data Source: Ministry of Agriculture

Discussion

This measure provides an indication of how capacity is being built within farm communities to influence issues that affect agriculture. An Agricultural Area Plan is a community-based initiative to develop practical solutions to agricultural issues and to identify opportunities to strengthen farming. Key stakeholders prepare the plan, which includes strategies for economic development, marketing, processing, agri-tourism and proposals for bylaw amendments to support agriculture. Relevant parts of an Agricultural Area Plan become a subset of the official community plan. In October 2012 there were 50 completed Agricultural Area Plans throughout B.C., with at least nine more underway. The ultimate number of Agricultural Area Plans will depend on how jurisdictions choose to operate - e.g. some small communities may choose to work together on one plan, while other communities may consider separate plans to be unnecessary, as agriculture is an integral part of their community’s economy.

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

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

Strategies

- Continue to work with government and industry groups to identify and implement traceability and bio-security strategies that will reduce the risk of foreign animal disease outbreaks.
- Implement and deliver comprehensive provincial level programs for animal and plant health that manage the risks of animal disease, plant pests and invasive species and contribute to national programs.



Abbotsford Agriculture Centre, with Animal Health Centre (Containment Level 3) on left

- Protect the health of British Columbians by increasing awareness and adoption of food safety programs and practices.
- Develop and implement a provincially-operated, cost-effective meat inspection system to ensure ongoing food safety and industry support as well as livestock health and welfare.
- Maintain a provincially operated, cost effective seafood inspection system to ensure food safety, industry support, fish health and welfare in aquaculture production facilities and the value chain for fish handling and processing.
- Revise the Province’s animal health policy and legislation to further public health and safety and secure the sector’s market potential.
- Deliver plant health management programs and services to promote healthy and viable crops.
- Advise growers on best management practices for pest control.
- Provide training for safe use of pesticides which would enable registration of low risk products.

Performance Measure 6: Per cent of routine (diagnostic) animal and plant samples completed within seven working days.

Performance Measure	2012/13 Forecast	2013/14 Target	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target
Per cent of routine (diagnostic) animal and plant samples completed within seven working days ¹	85%	87%	87%	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.

The Plant Health Unit advises growers on the best management practices for pest control and provides training for safe use of pesticides. This training enables registration of low risk products. The Plant Health Diagnostic Laboratory provides plant health diagnoses and helps to fulfill the Plant Health Program’s mandate of providing programs and services to promote plant protection. The Plant Health Diagnostic Laboratory receives samples from growers of all commodities in B.C., pest management consultants, industry groups, home gardeners and the general public. In collaboration



The Plant Health Unit monitors pest outbreaks and conducts surveillance for non-native invasive pests.

with the plant health team and other ministry staff, the plant lab increases the capability for early detection of new insect and disease threats.

Discussion

The Abbotsford Agriculture Centre houses the Animal Health Centre and the Plant Health Diagnostics Laboratory. The Animal Health Centre is a veterinary diagnostic laboratory, with a mandate to diagnose, monitor and assist in controlling and preventing animal disease in B.C. Although primarily concerned with food-producing animals, the Centre also provides diagnostic services for companion animals, 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 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals investigations are also regularly submitted to the Centre for examination and diagnostic tests.



Plant health diagnoses, performed at the Abbotsford Agriculture Centre, support early detection of new insect and disease threats.

Resource Summary

Core Business Area	2012/13 Restated Estimates ¹	2013/14 Estimates ⁷	2014/15 Plan	2015/16 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Agriculture Science and Policy ^{1,2,3,4}	12,531	24,441	23,531	23,631
Strategic Industry Partnerships ^{1,3}	34,449	34,614	34,439	34,439
BC Farm Industry Review Board	896	896	896	896
Executive and Support Services ^{1,4}	6,793	6,751	6,751	6,751
Sub Total	54,669	66,702	65,617	65,717
Agricultural Land Commission ⁵	1,974	2,905	3,516	3,391
Production Insurance Special Account (Net) ³	11,500	9,700	9,700	9,700
Total	68,143	79,307	78,833	78,808

Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services	290	355	593	568
Total	290	355	593	568

Core Business Area	2012/13 Restated Estimates	2013/14 Estimates	2014/15 Plan	2015/16 Plan
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Agriculture Credit Act – Receipts ⁶	6	6	6	6
Agriculture Credit Act – Disbursements	-	-	-	-
Total Net Cash Source (Requirements)	6	6	6	6

¹ The restated 2012/13 Estimates reflect the transfer of the Range Policy program to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the transfer of the Meat Inspection program from the Ministry of Health, and a STOB neutral re-alignment within the Ministry.

² Changes in the 2013/14 through 2015/16 budgets reflect an increase for the Greenhouse Carbon Tax Rebate program.

³ Changes in the 2013/14 through 2015/16 budgets reflect a net change in Growing Forward 2 funding.

⁴ Changes in the 2013/14 through 2015/16 budgets reflect management expenditure saving targets.

⁵ Changes in the 2013/14 through 2015/16 budgets reflect an increase in support to ALC for its new regulatory fee and revenue structure.

⁶ Receipts represent principal repayments on outstanding loans issued under the Agricultural Credit Act, which was terminated on March 31, 1995. The Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act, 2003, provides the provisions for the loan repayments.

⁷ Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix A: Agricultural Land Commission

Purpose of the Commission

The Agricultural Land Commission is the provincial agency responsible for administering the Agricultural Land Reserve, a provincial land use zone for the primary use of agriculture. As an administrative tribunal operating at arm's-length from government, the Agricultural Land Commission is accountable to the legislature through the Minister of Agriculture. Its operations are funded by a vote of the legislature.

In general, an administrative tribunal is a specialized government agency established under provincial legislation to implement legislative policy. Administrative tribunals engaged in an adjudicative process function in a manner more closely analogous to the courts. Procedure is less formal than before the courts and the rules of evidence do not apply, although decisions must be based only on sound evidence. The Agricultural Land Commission is expected to exercise its role in a non-partisan manner.

The work of the Agricultural Land Commission is carried out by provincial government appointed Commissioners. The appointed Commissioners are the board of directors of the Agricultural Land Commission which is supported by professional staff located in Burnaby.

The purposes of the Agricultural Land Commission as set out in the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* are:

- To preserve agricultural land;
- To encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and
- To encourage local governments, First Nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies.

The core business functions of the Agricultural Land Commission are land use planning and policy, working with local governments and stakeholders on land use matters affecting the Agricultural Land Reserve, compliance and enforcement and land use applications.

Through its annual business plan and other strategic documents, the Agricultural Land Commission establishes the goals, objectives and strategies it believes are necessary to achieve its mandate. Further information about the work of the Agricultural Land Commission may be found at www.alc.gov.bc.ca

Agricultural Land Commission Business Plan Goals, Objectives and Strategies:

Goal 1: Preserve Agricultural Land and Encourage Farming

Objective 1.1: Preserve the provincial agricultural land base through comprehensive decision making

Strategies

- Consideration of agricultural capability and suitability of lands under application.
- Consideration of the potential impacts on the land base and the agricultural use of the land base.

Objective 1.2: Expand current planning functions to include proactive planning related to community planning, major projects and emerging issues.

Strategies

- Encourage local governments to engage in discussions with the Agricultural Land Commission and planning staff early in their land use planning processes.
- Encourage local government and other land use agencies to develop agriculturally sympathetic land use planning.
- Review Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries in select areas of the province with a view to confirming the accuracy and appropriateness of the boundary.
- Become involved in major projects at the early conceptual developmental phase.
- Research and assess emerging issues that impact the agricultural land base.

Objective 1.3: Ensure a high degree of compliance with the Agricultural Land Commission Act, regulation and orders of the Agricultural Land Commission.

Strategies

- Ensure compliance with the Act, regulations and orders of the Agricultural Land Commission based on current resources.
- Follow up on complaints of inappropriate use of Agricultural Land Reserve lands.

Objective 1.4: Propose ways to strengthen the Agricultural Land Commission’s mandate and improve operations.

Strategies

- Initiate a visioning exercise that will forecast where the Agricultural Land Reserve program should be positioned for the next several decades.
- Identify options for enhancing the program in order to strengthen its mandate and improve operations.
- Work with the Minister responsible to bring forward proposed legislative and regulatory changes to strengthen the Agricultural Land Reserve and the mandate of the Agricultural Land Commission.



The B.C. fruit and vegetable industry supplies local and other markets with high quality produce.

Appendix B: British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board

Purpose of the Board:

The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board (the Board) is an independent administrative tribunal that operates at arm's-length from government. As the regulatory tribunal responsible for the general supervision of B.C. regulated marketing boards and commissions, the Board makes rules, regulations, and policy decisions to protect the public interest. In its adjudicative capacity, the Board provides a less formal system than the court for resolving disputes in a timely and cost effective way. The Board consists of a part-time board of up to ten members and nine full time equivalent positions and is accountable to government for its administrative operations.

The Board's statutorily mandated responsibilities are established in the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act, the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and the Agricultural Produce Grading Act and include:

- supervising B.C.'s regulated marketing boards and commissions;
- being a signatory to formal federal-provincial cooperation agreements in regulated marketing;
- hearing appeals of provincial agricultural commodity board decisions;
- hearing appeals of Minister of Agriculture decisions to refuse, suspend, revoke or not renew agricultural produce grading licenses;
- hearing appeals related to animal custody decisions of the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;
- hearing farm practices complaints from persons disturbed by odour, noise, dust or other disturbances arising from agriculture or certain aquaculture operations; and
- conducting farm practices studies.

Through its annual strategic plan and other strategic documents, the Board establishes the goals, objectives, strategies and performance measures it believes are necessary to achieve its mandates. Further information about the British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board may be found at <http://www.firb.gov.bc.ca/>.

British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board Business Plan Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures:

Goal 1: A regulated marketing system with effective self-governance.

Objective 1.1: The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board and marketing boards and commissions practice good governance in their external and internal operations.

Strategies

- Ensuring that marketing boards and commission activities and decisions are administratively fair, in compliance with legislation/regulations and in accord with sound marketing policy.
- Requiring boards to give consideration to the government policy framework and the public interest.
- Providing supervisory intervention when necessary.
- Working to achieve priorities within budget while continuing to place importance on board and staff development and training.



Dairy production is a critical component of the B.C. agrifoods sector.

Performance Measures:

- The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board and the boards and commissions it supervises exercise appropriate governance and fiscal procedures in exercising their mandates. [Target: All boards and commissions meet expectations by 2014].
- Boards and commissions demonstrate that their programs, policies and decisions reflect legislative intent, sound marketing policy and consider the public interest [Target: All boards and commissions meet expectations by 2014].
- The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board demonstrates fiscal responsibility by operating within budget. [Target: Expenditures within 5% of budget].

Goal 2: A principles-based, outcomes-oriented approach to regulation.

Objective 2.1: The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board and marketing boards and commissions use a principles-based approach to regulating.

Strategies

- Working with boards and commissions to develop, adopt and employ a principles-based approach to regulation.
- Requiring all British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board, marketing board and commission orders, decisions and determinations to be made available to the public, except where privacy legislation and policies apply.
- Promoting policies that reflect B.C. interests at both the federal and provincial levels.

Performance Measures:

- The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board and the boards and commissions it supervises demonstrate the application of the Strategic, Accountable, Fair, Effective, Transparent and Inclusive principles in their programs, policies and decisions. [Target: All boards meet expectations by 2014].
- British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board orders, decisions, determinations, practices and procedures and other information are published. Marketing board and commission orders, decisions and determinations are published promptly after being made in order to preserve rights of appeal under the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act. [Target: All boards meet expectations].
- The British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board and the boards and commissions it supervises work to maintain and, where possible, grow the market for B.C. produced product. [Target: No loss in production or in base allocation for supply managed sectors].

Goal 3: Effective, fair and independent resolution of inquiries and disputes.

Objective 3.1: Ensure issues and disputes arising within the British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board’s jurisdiction are resolved in a fair and timely manner.

Strategies

- Using farm practices studies to help prevent and resolve farm practices disputes.
- Using supervisory processes to help prevent and resolve regulated marketing disputes.
- Using timely, fair and accessible processes to help resolve complaints (under the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act), and appeals (under the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Agricultural Produce Grading Act).

Performance Measures:

- Most appeals and complaints are handled within target process timelines. [Target: 80%].
- Demonstrated increased use of Alternative Dispute Resolution by marketing boards and commissions and the British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board. [Target: Alternate Dispute Resolution is used whenever appropriate.]



Appendix C: Ministry Contact Information

Ministry of Agriculture:

P.O. Box 9120 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria B.C., V8W 9B4
Ph.: (250) 387-5121

Strategic Industry Partnerships Division:

Ph.: (250) 356-1122, Fax (250) 356-7279

Agriculture Science and Policy Division:

Ph.: (250) 356-1821, Fax (250) 356-7279

Ministry of Agriculture - Regional Offices:

Abbotsford

1767 Angus Campbell Road, V3G 2M3
Ph.: (604) 556-3001
Fax: (604) 556-3030
Toll free 1-888-221-7141
Animal Health toll free 1-800-661-9903

Courtenay

2500 Cliffe Avenue, V9N 5M6
Ph.: (250) 897-7540
Fax: (250) 334-1410

Cranbrook/Invermere

635 – 4th Street, Invermere, V0A 1K0
Ph.: (250) 342-4219
Fax: (250) 342-4262

Creston

1243 Northwest Boulevard, V0B 1G6
Ph.: (250) 402-6429
Fax: (250) 402-6497

Dawson Creek

4th Floor, 1201 - 103rd Avenue, V1G 4J2
Ph.: (250) 784-2601
Fax: (250) 784-2299
Toll free 1-877-772-2200

Duncan

5785 Duncan Street, V9L 5G2

Ph.: (250) 746-1210

Fax: (250) 746-1292

Fort St. John

10043 - 100th Street, V1J 3Y5

Ph.: (250) 787-3240

Fax: (250) 787-3299

Toll free 1-888-822-1345

Kamloops

2nd Floor, 441 Columbia Street, V2C 2T3

Ph.: 250-828-4506

Fax: 250-828-4154

Toll free 1-888-823-3355

Kelowna

Unit 200 - 1690 Powick Road, V1X 7G5

Ph.: (250) 861-7211

Fax: (250) 861-7490

Toll free 1-888-332-3352

Oliver

Suite 201 583 Fairview Road, V0H 1T0

Ph.: (250) 498-5250 or 5251

Fax: (250) 498-4952

Toll free 1-888-812-8811

Prince George

2000 South Ospika Boulevard, V2N 4W5

Ph.: (250) 614-7400

Fax: (250) 614-7435

Toll free 1-800-334-3011

Vernon

2501 – 14th Avenue, V1T 8Z1

Ph.: (250) 260-4610

Fax: (250) 260-4602

Toll free 1-877-702-5585

Williams Lake

300 - 640 Borland Street, V2G 4T1
Ph.: (250) 398-4500
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Toll free 1-800-474-6133

Agricultural Land Commission

133 - 4940 Canada Way, Burnaby B.C., V5G 4K6
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BC Farm Industry Review Board

780 Blanshard Street, Victoria B.C., V8W 9B5
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For more information about the Ministry of Agriculture, including full contact information, visit our website at: www.gov.bc.ca/agri/



A wide range of mushrooms are cultivated or wild-harvested in B.C.