

Ministry of Agriculture and Food

2025/26 – 2027/28 Service Plan

March 2025



For more information on the Ministry of Agriculture and Food contact:

PO BOX 9120

STN PROV GOVT

VICTORIA, BC

V8W 9B4

1-888-221-7141

Or visit our website at

<https://www.gov.bc.ca/agri>

Published by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Agriculture and Food 2025/26 – 2027/28 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lana Popham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture and Food
March 4, 2025

Table of Contents

Minister's Accountability Statement	3
Strategic Direction.....	5
Purpose of the Ministry	5
Operating Environment.....	5
Economic Statement.....	7
Performance Planning.....	7
Financial Summary.....	19
Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations	20
Appendix B: Minister's Mandate Letter	21

Strategic Direction

In 2025/26, the Government of British Columbia will continue to prioritize delivering the services and infrastructure needed for people to build good lives in strong communities.

To support this objective, Government will focus on growing the economy, responding to the threat of tariffs, creating good paying jobs, improving affordability, strengthening health care and education, and making communities safer.

Government will also continue deepening relationships with Indigenous Peoples while advancing implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

This 2025/26 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Agriculture and Food will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the Minister's January 2025 [Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Agriculture and Food](#) (the ministry) is responsible for supporting the production, marketing, processing and merchandising of agriculture and seafood products; providing business risk management programs including crop insurance to the sector, knowledge and technical training and extension services, food safety and plant and animal health programs; and the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture and seafood, supporting the province's food security and developing a resilient food system and economy.

The ministry is a key contributor to economic development and province-wide job creation, particularly for small and medium sized farms and food processing businesses. The agriculture, food and beverage sector create economic and social benefits for Indigenous groups and other underrepresented groups, has the potential to attract provincial investment, and contributes to workforce development and skills training.

The legal and regulatory environment that guides the work of the ministry includes 30 statutes which relate wholly or primarily to the ministry. A [complete list of legislation for which the ministry is responsible](#) is available online.

Operating Environment

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has operated in an incredibly challenging environment this fiscal year.

The U.S. is B.C.'s largest trading partner and top export market for agriculture, food, and seafood accounting for approximately 75 percent of exports. Uncertainty in the trading relationship between Canada and the US may impact B.C.'s agricultural sector. This increase

uncertainty for B.C.'s agriculture, food, and seafood exporters. Millions of jobs on both sides of the border depend on the Canada-U.S. trade relationship.

The Ministry's Animal Health Centre, located in Abbotsford, is still addressing the impacts of the atmospheric river event and subsequent flooding of 2021. This challenge has been exacerbated by continuing and worsening avian influenza outbreaks, which, in 2024 coincided with an outbreak of chronic wasting disease in some cervid populations. These outbreaks result in large surges in demand for testing at the AHC, because real time testing is critical to determine the extent of outbreaks and whether response measures are working. Since September 2024 the AHC has conducted more than 5,800 tests for avian influenza and more than 2,800 tests for chronic wasting disease.

Additionally, the Province's agricultural sector has faced continual extreme weather events such as wildfires and droughts and more severe than normal winter freeze events. These events have caused significant economic challenges for the sector, focused on the province's interior. The ministry's Business Risk Management Branch (BRMB) plays a critical role in supporting the recovery of British Columbia's agricultural sector when catastrophic loss events occur. This support is provided through a suite of insurance and income stability programs, which are jointly funded through the Province and Canada under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership agreement: AgriStability, AgriInsurance (Production Insurance), AgriInvest, AgriRecovery, and Agriculture Wildlife Damage Compensation.

These business risk management programs are the foundational component of a farmer's financial risk management strategy and are developed to be nonmarket distorting and trade compliant. The programs are designed to work together to help farmers return to production when catastrophic events beyond their control occur. However, as the frequency and severity of catastrophic weather events increase, the ability of the Business Risk Management Branch to provide the needed recovery supports is becoming increasingly difficult with ongoing resource constraints (budgetary and administrative).

To help address these challenges, the ministry has been given a mandate to focus its energy on growing the economy by creating good jobs across the province, and to help reduce costs for families. In the coming year, the ministry will collaborate with farmers and food processors to ensure that all ministry programming is focused on improving the lives of BC families. Farmers and food producers expect that ministry programming will serve their needs, and the ministry will ensure that its programs remain relevant and efficient.

The ministry will work to improve affordability by helping ensure that costs of production are reasonable, and it will champion the popular FeedBC and BuyBC programs to ensure that local products are available in public institutions and grocery store shelves. Advocacy efforts that are targeted towards the federal government will focus on making improvements to key programs that farmers rely on, and the ministry will partner with other ministries to serve as a liaison to the restaurant industry. ALR policies will be reviewed to ensure that the ALR is being used to its fullest potential through strengthened regional food systems.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy experienced moderate growth last year amid relatively high interest rates, persistent price pressures and ongoing global economic uncertainty. The labour market ended the year on a positive note, supported by high immigration and strong population growth. Inflation in B.C. continued to moderate as the price growth of goods eased, while inflation for services remained elevated. Consumer spending and home sales activity were weaker for most of 2024 in the wake of still elevated interest rates and high prices. Subdued global demand and lower prices for key commodities led to a decline in the value of the province's merchandise exports in 2024. Meanwhile, B.C. homebuilding activity remained relatively strong following record high housing starts in 2023.

The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP rose by 1.2 per cent in 2024. In the near-term, the EFC expects B.C.'s economy to grow by 1.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.9 per cent in 2026, in line with the national average. For Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 1.4 per cent in 2024 and projects national real GDP growth of 1.8 per cent in 2025 and 1.9 per cent in 2026. These projections do not fully include the impact of the evolving U.S. tariff situation.

Restrictive global trade policies, particularly potential U.S. tariffs, pose a risk to the outlook and there is uncertainty over the degree and timing of impacts on B.C.'s economy, and among the province's trading partners. Other risks include lower population growth due to changes to federal immigration policy, as well as the potential for renewed price pressures leading to interest rates remaining elevated for longer, weaker global demand, and commodity market volatility.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Strengthen B.C.'s food security and provincial food systems

Strengthening provincial food security through a sustainable and profitable agriculture and food sector where responsible land use remains a provincial priority as it contributes to a strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone.

Objective 1.1: Strengthen the capacity in the provincial food system and increase economic opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and processors

Ensure that the Feed BC and Buy BC programs will drive economic opportunities and job growth across the sector, increase the safety and availability of local food, and build the sustainability and reliability of the provincial food system. Integrated programs targeting industry renewal and competitiveness, sustainability, and capacity will address gaps in food supply resilience.

Key Strategies

- Developing a Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Growth and Competitiveness to work with industry and cross government partners to grow the profitability and success of the sector.
- Increase the awareness of the Buy BC brand with B.C. citizens and the availability and promotion of Buy BC licensed products at grocery stores across B.C.
- Enhance Feed BC by building demand for local foods in more B.C. public institutions through partnerships with key sectors such as health, post-secondary, and potential expansion to new institutional market channels, activating business opportunities to connect demand to supply and supporting the readiness of B.C. businesses to supply more locally grown and processed food.
- Continue to integrate Feed BC into the Province's Feeding Futures Framework to increase local food use and opportunities within B.C.'s K-12 school food programs.

The ministry has an integrated suite of programs and strategies to support this objective. Under Buy BC, this involves evaluations and audits to support the refinement and further targeting of Buy BC programming to meet industry needs. Under Feed BC, the forecast forward reflects anticipated growth supported by continued Ministry mandate to support Feed BC and increase use of B.C products in institutions, including healthcare, post-secondary and K-12 schools.

Objective 1.2: Working with Indigenous people on food security initiatives and economic development opportunities

Working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders and Indigenous Peoples to advance responsive reconciliation actions, the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and to uphold Indigenous self-determination remains a priority and responsibility for the Ministry.

Key Strategies

- Ensure effective, responsive, and supportive policies, programs and services to meet the needs of First Nations and Indigenous communities and businesses and address barriers to participation through the B.C. Indigenous Pathfinder Service, the Indigenous Food Pathways Program and other Ministry initiatives and operations.
- Work in partnership with the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food, other Indigenous partners and the sector, included as a part of Ministry commitments laid out in the Declaration Act Action Plan (Goal 4.48), to support the realization of Indigenous Peoples' food security objectives, strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector.
- Enhance Indigenous food sector capacity through work with rural and remote First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples to improve program and service delivery for

the expansion of food security initiatives as well as economic development opportunities.

- Strengthen Indigenous, interagency and cross-sector partnerships through work with First Nations Health Authority, government and Indigenous organizational partners to improve collaboration and collective understanding of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and interests on food security and food systems to guide planning and action in B.C.

Discussion

Supporting First Nations rights-holders and Indigenous communities to meet their self-determined food production, food security and economic development goals is a vital part of strengthening community food security in B.C. This includes a commitment to understand and respect Indigenous food systems, acknowledge impacts of colonization and address the historic and systemic barriers to Indigenous food security and participation in the sector. To advance food security and agricultural economic development priorities, the Ministry will develop distinction-based approaches¹ that enable capacity building, improve social, cultural and economic well-being, and lead to the equitable participation for Indigenous Peoples in the sector.

Forming the B.C. Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food was a crucial step towards strengthening the Ministry's capacity to support the realization of Indigenous Peoples' food security objectives, strengthen Indigenous food systems and increase Indigenous participation in the agriculture and food sector. The Council was the first of its kind in Canada. It is guided by a three-year [strategic plan](#) and supports direct access for Ministry staff to Indigenous knowledge holders.

The Ministry has also created the Indigenous Partnerships and Reconciliation Branch to work with Indigenous partners and allies to guide responsive Reconciliation actions relating to Indigenous food systems and the food and agriculture sector.

Objective 1.3: Expand the data available on the Agricultural Land Reserve

Ensuring that the ministry has access to comprehensive data and information on the usage of Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is essential for informed land use decision-making. This information plays a pivotal role in guiding various ministry and government priorities, while also facilitating collaboration with farmers, industry stakeholders, and government entities in the development of long-term planning strategies and the enhancement of food security within the province.

¹ A distinction-based approach means that the Province's work with [First Nations](#), [Métis](#), and Inuit people will be conducted in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.

Key Strategies

- Accelerate the pace of Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUI) to establish a full and updated provincial baseline.
- Invest in research and development into new technologies to ensure a more sustainable ALUI program and enable more frequent ALUI updates.
- Develop an online portal to ensure that all ALUI data is readily accessible with tools available to facilitate data informed decisions on the land base.

Discussion

To make informed decisions, the province needs to know how the ALR is being used and have data that is current and available province wide. This includes information on the types and amount of farming that is occurring, as well as the volume of value-added and processing activities underway. ALUI's collect consistent, credible, and comprehensive data about land use and land cover on agricultural lands across the province.

Maintaining a province-wide ALUI was a recommendation from the "Revitalizing the ALR and the Agricultural Land Commission" Final Committee Report to support policy and program development and the ALR. The ministry developed a five-year ALUI Program strategy to update all agricultural regions in the province with an ALUI baseline by March 31, 2028, completed to current ALUI standards.

There are many decision-makers involved in the ALR, including local governments, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and numerous provincial government ministries. Having access to data to definitively demonstrate what is occurring on the ALR (and how things are changing), will result in better decisions, policies, and regulations. ALUI has the potential to be a powerful tool, but the information must be current, comprehensive, and accessible. The ministry has developed a strategy to deliver a fully updated provincial baseline and the tools and methodologies in place to ensure this information remains up to date and accessible.

A key aspect of the ALUI update process involves research and development aimed at leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies to streamline the digitization of parcels and the identification of land use and land cover changes over time, thereby reducing time and labor demands. The use of high-resolution imagery is essential for any ALUI project, necessitating the allocation of sustained resources to support these projects. The overall goal of this work is to reduce the cost of collecting and maintaining the ALUI over time.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
1a Number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed towards a minimum 30 percent of B.C. food expenditures within total annual food expenditures	201	211	219	227	234
1b Number of Buy BC logo licensed products	7,500	9,000	10,500	12,000	13,500

Data source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Discussion

1a Feed BC partner facilities: Increasing the number of government or other Feed BC partner facilities that have committed to and are tracking towards a minimum 30 percent B.C. food within their total annual food expenditures provides new market opportunities for B.C. producers and processors and supports increased provincial food supply and food system resilience.

1b Buy BC logo licensed products: Increasing the number of Buy BC logo licensed products that are grown, harvested, raised, or processed in B.C., along with undertaking Buy BC activities focused on online engagement, promotional campaigns, retail and industry partnerships, drives increased consumer awareness of the Buy BC brand and expands local food purchasing. In 2024/25 registrations of Buy BC products have far exceeded original targets due to strong consumer interest and expansion of retail partnerships.

Goal 2: Support the B.C. agriculture and food sector to be competitive and profitable while adapting to climate change

Globally, climate change threatens food security. Food producers are adapting or preparing for both an increasing frequency and severity of climate-related events and longer-term impacts of climate change. The scale and scope of this challenge requires support from government to help facilitate the sector's continued efforts to become ready for climate-related events, contribute to emission reduction solutions, and ensure that British Columbia's long-term food security can be protected.

Objective 2.1: Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience

In recent years, British Columbians have experienced the full spectrum of climate-related events (e.g., extreme heat, drought, wildfires, floods), and few sectors have been hit as hard as agriculture. Climate science tells us that this trend is only going to intensify over the coming decades as we face increasingly frequent and damaging climate-related events. In addition to

these events, climate driven emergence of pests and pathogens in animals and plants will also increase.

The Province of B.C. has adopted the United Nations Sendai Framework, which outlines five key priorities that are guiding the ministry's evolving approach to climate related events and the associated risk as listed in the key strategies below.

Key Strategies

- **Understanding risk:** Continued investment in science and monitoring capacities to understand climate changes in B.C.'s weather and the impacts of these changes on the availability of agricultural water, drought and flood risks, ocean acidification and hypoxia, invasive species, diseases, pests, and other climate stressors.
- **Strengthening governance:** The Emergency Management Branch will provide expertise and support coordination for preparedness, mitigation, and response efforts involving the agriculture sector, including the development and implementation of a multi-year Emergency Management Strategic Plan.
- **Investing in on-farm resiliency:** Expansion of cost-shared programming to support extreme weather preparedness supports for agricultural producers to protect their operations from extreme weather events.
- **Enhancing preparedness:** The ministry will support industry efforts to improve response capacity for plant and animal health risks, including but not limited to Avian Influenza, by increasing engagement and capacity-building initiatives across high-risk agriculture sectors.
- **Capacity building for resilience:** Establish outreach and education programs for local authorities, Indigenous peoples, and industry organizations to support agriculture sector resiliency in the face of rapidly changing climate-related risk profiles.

Discussion

In the wake of increasingly significant drought, wildfire, flooding, and other emergency events over the last several years, the ministry has been scaling up its capacity to address emerging emergency incidents and strengthening the overall climate readiness of the food and agricultural sector. Work towards this objective is being supported by newly established roles and organizational units within the ministry, including the establishment of the Emergency Management Branch with additional staff and the expansion of regional extension services supporting producers in adapting to climate change.

Objective 2.2: Continue to optimize Business Risk Management programs to meet the recovery needs of BC farmers when they experience a catastrophic loss event

The Business Risk Management (BRM) suite (Production Insurance, AgriStability, AgriRecovery, AgriInvest, Agricultural Wildlife Compensation) assists BC's viable agricultural producers to recover from extreme loss events beyond their control, including production losses, severe

market volatility, extreme weather events, and disasters. The BRM suite of programs evolve through continual review of policy, design and administrative processes so the programs meet the recovery needs of viable BC farmers when catastrophic loss events occur.

Key Strategies

- Enhanced Client Service: BRM branch (BRMB) is investing in client service improvements to BRM programs, including implementing an AgriStability “Notice of Loss” process, analyzing behavioral insights analysis to better understand barriers and drivers to BRM program participation, and improving and enhancing BRM marketing and communication approaches and tools.
- Responsive policy and product development to meet sector needs: BRMB is evaluating the potential to add new insurance products for pasture and tree nurseries, and extending the current grape product probable yield averaging period. B.C. is collaborating with Canada and the other provinces to develop and implement changes nationally to ensure that adequate and equitable BRM protection is available to all farms.
- Engage existing farmer and commodity advisory committees to advise the BRM policy development process: BRMB continues to lead and contribute to policy discussions and development at the Federal-Provincial-Territorial policy tables. Policy development is directly informed by farmers through BC’s Risk Management Advisory Committee, multiple Commodity Advisory Committees, and other formal and informal discussions with farmers.

Discussion

BRM programs are delivered under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Agreement, with the Ministry administering the Production Insurance, AgriStability, Agricultural Wildlife Compensation programs and AgriRecovery initiatives. AgriInvest is administered by Canada. The Ministry has dedicated resources and expertise to support the implementation of the key strategies for this objective. The ministry participates in all levels of policy discussions and negotiations with Canada and the other provinces and territories. BRMB has developed long-standing relationships with commodity groups and farmers to understand BC farmers’ BRM policy positions. The continued discussions with existing agriculture risk management advisory committees will be key to achieving this goal.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Baseline	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
2a Number of beneficial management practice projects* completed by farmers which support climate resilient agriculture practices and technologies	653	860	800	800	800

Data source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food (*includes BMP and EWP projects)

Discussion

2a Beneficial management practices: Beneficial management practices are tracked by the delivery of beneficial management practice projects through various funding programs. These projects are implemented and adopted by individual farmers and producers. These practices contribute to climate resilient agriculture production, indicating a shift in on-farm production to include more resilient agriculture practices. Cumulative growth in the volume of beneficial management practice projects implemented over time indicates the prevalence of adoption, ongoing use, and rate of transition to beneficial management practices.

Goal 3: Support the agriculture, food and beverage sector in growing and diversifying domestic and international markets.

The ministry is working to support the sector to expand and diversify domestic and international markets through the delivery of a suite of market development programs and services. By helping to increase sales and diversify markets, the ministry supports the sector's ability to contribute to sustainable and resilient economic growth for the province.

Objective 3.1: Increase the capacity and manage risks for the B.C. agriculture, food and beverage sector to expand domestic and international competitiveness

Leveraging B.C.'s agriculture, food and beverage sector's competitive advantages, addressing barriers to growth and building capacity to capitalize on market opportunities will enable business and job growth.

Key Strategies

- Support a coordinated government presence in collaboration with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development, and Innovation, as well as federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) governments on trade agreements, irritants and contingency plans in the event of tariffs.
- Deliver trade diversification seminars and resources for B.C.'s agriculture, food and beverage sector to assist them in understanding market requirements, opportunities and challenges specific to key international markets.
- Provide cost-shared funding through the B.C. Agriculture and Food Export Program to B.C.'s agriculture, food, and beverage businesses to support their ability to conduct market research, establish diversification plans, and conduct market development and diversification activities.
- Increase B.C. processing innovation, productivity and competitiveness through improved industry access to facilities, equipment, technology, training, technical services and other supports.

Discussion

The sector's competitiveness is dependent upon a wide range of factors that drive economic productivity, market development and ultimately growth. As a sector primarily comprised of small to medium-size businesses, the first step to improving competitiveness is increasing capacity and awareness of opportunities, informing actions through market research and planning, and preparing companies to meet market requirements. Targeted export readiness activities support the sector to identify and pursue market development opportunities both abroad and domestically.

Expanding market opportunities will require additional actions to address barriers to growth. As food and beverage manufacturing account for 57 percent of B.C.'s total agriculture, food, and seafood industry GDP, there is a strong focus on expanding opportunities for this part of the sector by increasing value-add activities on B.C. grown products, facilitating and enabling food processing innovation, and investments to improve productivity and profitability.

Objective 3.2: Expand and diversify B.C. agriculture, food and beverage export markets.

B.C.'s broad array of products and strong international reputation for high food safety standards positions the sector to expand export opportunities. Increasing and diversifying export sales increases the long-term resiliency of the sector by reducing market risk and contributes to economic growth and job creation across the province.

Key Strategies

- Support a coordinated government presence in collaboration with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development, and Innovation to support industry participation and promotion at large international tradeshows and business to business matchmaking events with support from provincial and federal trade representatives.
- Provide cost-shared funding to farmers, food and beverage processors, and industry associations to support industry-led international market development activities that support the sector in developing and diversifying export markets.
- Make continuous improvements to the B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Export-Ready Business Catalogue to support the ability of B.C. Trade and Investment Representatives and Canadian Trade Commissioners to help connect international food buyers with B.C. exporters.

Discussion

Increasing and diversifying export sales includes maintaining competitiveness in existing markets and supporting trade diversification activities. Coordinating a strong industry presence and facilitating connections to foreign buyers at key international tradeshows and events and showcasing B.C. food and beverage products through in-market promotional activities, ensures that B.C. exporters can develop and maintain strong trading relationships and drive consumer demand and sales of B.C. exports.

Objective 3.3: Support market access through a high standard of animal and plant health programming and diagnostic services.

Plant and animal health and welfare are key factors in increasing the production of a wide range of agricultural products for domestic consumption, for sustaining and building public confidence in those products, and for maintaining international trade. Strategies that enhance and protect plant and animal health and welfare in the province are critical to growing and diversifying domestic and export markets.

Key Strategies

- Provide diagnostic, surveillance, prevention and response programming for priority diseases affecting plant and animal health, as well as food safety, such as avian influenza, African Swine Fever, and *Salmonella spp.*
- Build genomics capacity for animal and plant health, as well as food safety, in the context of a BC One Health Strategy (a cross-disciplinary approach to optimize the health of people, animals, plants and their shared environments; recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment, including ecosystems, are closely linked and inter-dependent).
- Enhance services to help producers meet plant and animal health and animal welfare requirements for expanded market access.
- Collaborate with stakeholder organizations to develop new and improved policy and programming for the welfare of production animals, including access to veterinary services.

Objective 3.4: Supporting Plant and Animal Health

The B.C. Plant and Animal Health Centre (PAHC) sustained significant flood-related damage during the atmospheric river event of November 2021. While extensive rehabilitation work allowed the facility to resume operations, its long-term viability remains uncertain due to ongoing seismic vulnerabilities and its location within a floodplain. Recognizing the substantial impact of the 2021 floods on PAHC operations, the AF continues to plan for a new PAHC facility. As the leading laboratory services provider in Western Canada, PAHC plays a critical role in diagnostic testing for the agriculture sector, including efforts to mitigate trade barriers caused by pests or diseases of concern.

Additionally, PAHC provides zoonotic disease surveillance, helping to safeguard public health in British Columbia. This was demonstrated during recent concurrent outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza, COVID-19, and chronic wasting disease, which led to significant surges in testing demand to determine the scope of outbreaks and assess the effectiveness of response measures.

PAHC remains the only licensed, accredited, staffed, and fully equipped facility in B.C. capable of providing these essential services. Any interruption in operations, such as those experienced during the 2021 flood, increases risks to plant, animal, and public health across the province.

Key Strategies

- Enhanced Disaster Preparedness and ensuring Business Continuity: Implement flood and seismic resilience measures in the current facility until a new plan is put in place. Developing a contingency plan to establish an emergency response and business continuity plan to ensure minimal disruption in case of another flood event.
- Ensuring continuous Service delivery and modernization: Continue to invest cutting-edge technology, laboratory automation and genomics to enhance diagnostic speed and accuracy for disease surveillance and trade compliance by improving early detection systems.
- Strengthening Disease Surveillance and Biosecurity: Enhance Collaboration with Health and Agriculture Sectors: Strengthen partnerships with provincial and federal agencies (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Public Health Agency of Canada, Office of the Chief Veterinarian and Public Health Office), industry, veterinarians, and researchers to improve data sharing and response coordination

Discussion

Assurance in animal and plant health and food safety are pre-requisites to grow markets. For example, robust programs for foreign animal diseases, such as avian influenza and African Swine Fever, and other diseases with significant animal and public health impacts, reduce market interruptions and preserve livelihoods. Development and implementation of new technologies such as genomics, to detect and understand, predict and prevent health threats is necessary to meet customer expectations. Supporting plant and animal producers to meet increasing health and welfare requirements of international, national and regional customers is particularly critical for the diversification of B.C.'s agricultural sector.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023/24 Targets	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target
3a Number of B.C. agriculture and food businesses accessing ministry business and market programs	699	705	814	867	917

Data source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Discussion

In 2023, B.C. exported \$5.7 billion in agriculture, seafood, and processed food and beverage products to 189 different international markets. The top five export markets were the U.S (\$4.3 billion), China (\$530 million), Japan (\$206 million), South Korea (\$124 million), and Hong Kong (\$68 million).² Coordinated activities, in partnership with federal and provincial trade

² Data source: StatsCan: [Canadian International Merchandise Trade Web Application \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/26-669-x/2023001/article/00001-eng.htm)

representatives, will support B.C. agriculture, seafood, and processed food and beverage businesses to connect to and capitalize on export opportunities.

3a Number of agriculture and food businesses accessing business and market development programs: The number of B.C. agriculture and food businesses that access business and market development programs demonstrate the growth of the sector's capacity to successfully expand and diversify markets. Increasing the number of businesses that access business and market development programs supports market growth and diversification by ensuring businesses are competitive and reducing market risk. This enhances the long-term sustainability of the B.C. agriculture and food sector and promotes economic growth.

Financial Summary

(\$000s)	2024/25 Restated Estimates ¹	2025/26 Estimates	2026/27 Plan	2027/28 Plan
Operating Expenses				
Science, Policy, and Inspection	18,064	18,311	18,311	18,311
Agriculture Resources	68,425	72,205	75,885	77,925
BC Farm Industry Review Board	1,457	1,473	1,473	1,473
Executive and Support Services	7,058	7,131	7,131	7,131
Agricultural Land Commission	5,453	5,508	5,508	5,508
Production Insurance Account	29,679	38,349	22,019	22,537
Total	130,136	142,977	130,327	132,885
Capital Expenditures				
Executive and Support Services	853	853	853	853
Total	853	853	853	853

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2024/25 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2025/26 *Estimates*.

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

Appendix A: Public Sector Organizations

As of March 2025, the Minister of Agriculture and Food is responsible and accountable for the following Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Tribunals:

Agricultural Land Commission

The Provincial [Agricultural Land Commission](#) (ALC) is the independent administrative tribunal dedicated to preserving agricultural land and encouraging farming in B.C. The ALC is responsible for administering the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a provincial land use zone where agriculture is the primary land use taking place on the limited agricultural land base.

British Columbia Farm Industry Review 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 provides oversight, policy direction and decisions to ensure orderly marketing and to protect the public interest. In its adjudicative capacities, the Board provides a less formal system than the court for resolving disputes in a timely and cost-effective way.

Marketing Boards and Commissions

The Marketing Boards and Commissions include:

[BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission](#)

[BC Chicken Marketing Board](#)

[BC Cranberry Marketing Commission](#)

[BC Egg Marketing Board](#)

[BC Hog Marketing Commission](#)

[BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food](#)

[BC Milk Marketing Board](#)

[BC Turkey Marketing Board](#)

[BC Vegetable Marketing Commission](#)

[College of Veterinarians of BC](#)

Appendix B: Minister's Mandate Letter



January 16, 2025

Honourable Lana Popham
Minister of Agriculture and Food
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Popham:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Agriculture and Food at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

.../2

- **Strengthen health care** by expanding access to family doctors and recruiting and training more health professionals, ensuring that every British Columbian can access the care they need, no matter where they live. We will also increase access to addictions treatment and provide help for people whose struggles require intensive supports.
- **Make our neighbourhoods and communities safer** by working with law enforcement and social agencies to address street disorder, crack down on organized crime, and do all we can to ensure repeat offenders stay behind bars.

Our commitment to take action on climate change remains foundational and will be key to a healthy and prosperous BC for future generations.

Underlying all this work is our partnership with Indigenous peoples. Advancing reconciliation, implementing the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and working in partnership with First Nations rights-holders to advance shared interests is the responsibility of every Minister.

Over this mandate I expect you to prioritize making progress on the following:

- In order to protect key services that British Columbians rely on, work with the Minister of Finance to review all existing Ministry of Agriculture and Food programs and initiatives to ensure programs remain relevant, are efficient, and make life better for BC families by supporting BC farmers and food producers. This is important in the context of current Provincial budget constraints, market conditions, tariff threats, and the economic realities of farmers.
- Help grow the profitability and success of our agricultural sector by ensuring close connection between agricultural stakeholders and government policy makers through a Premier's Task Force with connections to relevant ministries across government.
- Support work led by the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation by working with farmers and food producers, and customers of British Columbia's agricultural products in:
 - advocating against proposed tariffs from the United States and ensuring continued expansion of our agricultural export programs for the mutual success of British Columbians and our trading partners;
 - expanding global markets for our products to diversify and reduce trade risk; and,
 - preparing contingency plans in the event that tariffs are imposed.
- Assume the role of government's liaison to the restaurant industry. In partnership with the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, be innovative in finding ways to connect farmers, restaurants, and the tourism sector to grow all three sectors.

- In partnership with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, support work led by that Ministry to reform BC's liquor and cannabis rules in ways that support the restaurant and agricultural sector.
- Ensure a continuation of public support for the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), including protection of BC families from food price shocks, promotion of financial success for farmers, access to farming as a career for aspiring farmers, and expanded economic growth in the province.
- Ensure that ALR land use restrictions are consistent with the potential and available uses of the actual land in the reserve, and that provision is made to expand food processing in the province to grow our food processing sector.
- Expand affordability and food security in the province by working with farmers to find ways to control costs for them and for the BC families who rely on their products, and by advocating with the federal government for fair programs for British Columbia food producers.
- Strengthen our regional food systems by supporting farming, expanding local food processing, identifying supply chain disruption vulnerabilities, and by increasing economic opportunities through FeedBC and BuyBC.

To assist you in meeting the commitments we have made to British Columbians, you are assigned a Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture whose focus will be to:

- Work with you to ensure that farmers and food and beverage producers across the province are represented and heard through the policy development process.
- Work with farmers and food and beverage producers in the Okanagan valley who have been impacted by significant weather-related crop loss.
- Work with Indigenous communities to identify opportunities for expansion of food security initiatives as well as economic development opportunities for rural and remote Indigenous communities.
- Make particular efforts to reach out to young people interested in agriculture and farming to identify their concerns and interests and ensure they are represented at the table.

You will work closely together and ensure your Parliamentary Secretary receives appropriate support to deliver on this work.

As you are aware, we have established an accord with the BC Green Caucus that supports our shared commitment to ensuring stable governance focused on delivering progress

and tangible outcomes for British Columbians. The commitments in that accord complement the direction in these mandate letters.

As a Cabinet, we will uphold the highest standards of ethics, collaboration, and good conduct in service of the public, and as a Minister of the Crown, you are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your Deputy Minister and the public servants under their direction, who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. Your Minister's Office must meet the highest standards for integrity and provide a respectful, rewarding environment for all staff.

The work we have ahead takes place in a profoundly challenging geopolitical environment. Close friends and neighbours to our south are contemplating imposing draconian tariffs on our products that would hurt both Americans and Canadians. Our allies internationally face governmental instability. Hate and racism are on the rise around the world. Artificial intelligence breakthroughs with unclear implications and astonishing potential are announced daily. Global inflation, snarled supply chains, and war are threatening global economic growth and prosperity as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy.

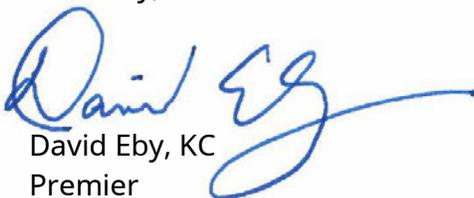
We have an obligation to protect and defend British Columbians, as well as seize opportunities, in these uncertain times.

The good news is that we have everything we need to succeed, and we will succeed. British Columbia's people – our workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, artists, and innovators – are among the most talented in the world. We are home to world-class educational institutions and public services. Our natural beauty is unmatched, we have internationally envied resources, and we are one of the most diverse places on the planet. Your job is to help us leverage these advantages in perilous times.

Use this mandate letter to guide your work, and do not be afraid to challenge assumptions, or be innovative, bold and aggressive in achieving the goals set out for you and your Ministry by the people of this province.

Thank you for joining me in the work ahead.

Sincerely,



David Eby, KC
Premier

cc: Harwinder Sandhu, MLA
Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture