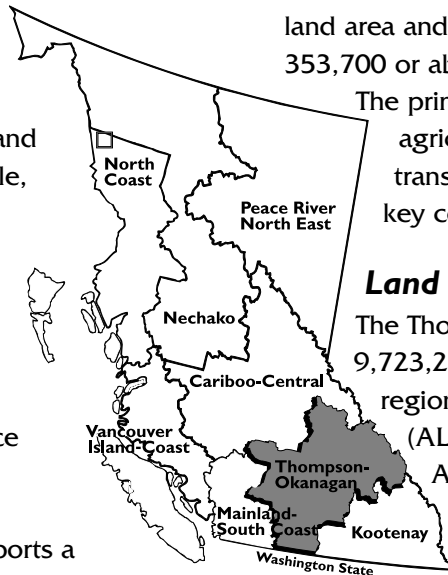


Thompson-Okanagan Region Agriculture Profile

Key Features:

- Mild climate with low annual precipitation.
- Production varies from fruit and vineyards to field crops, cattle, hogs and poultry.
- Commercial, farm-gate and estate wineries produce award-winning premium wines for markets across North America.
- Commercial orchards produce over half of Canada's apple exports.
- Good quality rangeland supports a thriving cattle industry.
- Small aquaculture industry provides trout-for-fee fishing and for commercial sale.
- Frost-free days: 148-175.
- Annual Precipitation (mm): 257-534.



land area and has an estimated population of 353,700 or about 12% of the provincial total.

The primary industries are forestry, mining, agriculture and tourism. Manufacturing, transportation and trade services are also key contributors to the economy.

Land

The Thompson-Okanagan region covers 9,723,230 ha. About 8.2% (793,153 ha) of the region is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). This is 17% of the provincial ALR.

Almost 83,000 ha of farmland are under crops. Approximately 9,000 ha is orchard. All types of tree fruits are grown, although apples are the main crop. Grapes for the wine industry are also dominant, and support the revitalized wine sector in BC. In the Okanagan, most agriculture is in the major valleys around Keremeos, from Osoyoos to Mara including Oliver, Penticton and Kelowna, and from Vernon east to Lumby.

Agriculture

Cattle ranching is important throughout the region, particularly in the Thompson and Nicola Valleys. Most ranching in this region is dependent on the use of forest Crown range for summer grazing. Ranching and logging are integrated and compatible uses of this land.

The Southern Interior area is classed as semi-arid, therefore agricultural production is dependent upon irrigation, except in the north east area. Livestock production is predominant in this area, with a number of feedlot operations. Other specialty crops, such as ginseng, are also grown as a result of the climatic and geographic characteristics.

Population	520,803
Number of Farms	5,486
Land in ALR	809,145 ha
Area of Farms	700,210 ha
Total Farm Capital	\$9.34billion
Jobs	176,122 weeks paid labour annually
Gross Farm Receipts	\$481 million
Annual Farm Wages	\$101.26 million

The Thompson-Okanagan Region

The Thompson-Okanagan region covers the Okanagan, Similkameen, Nicola and Thompson Valleys, as well as the Trans Canada Highway-CP Rail and CN Rail corridor from Revelstoke to the Fraser Canyon at Lytton. It contains 10% of the provincial

Vineyards, orchards and cattle are a traditional part of the region's character.

The region generally has very good agricultural land and the Okanagan is ideal for tree fruit production. Intensive agriculture takes place in the valleys of the Okanagan, Similkameen, Shuswap and Salmon Rivers. Apples, grapes and 96% of BC's soft fruits are grown in the south-central Okanagan. Further north in the Kelowna-Vernon area, apples are the main tree-fruit crop. Fruit processing companies and wineries are common in this area.

In the North Okanagan and Columbia Shuswap areas, livestock operations, dairy production, grains and forage crops are the prevalent types of agriculture. The numbers of dairy cattle have increased significantly over the past 10 years, and one processor expanded its milk-processing facility in 1996. The dairy industry in the North Okanagan generates more cash receipts than any other commodity.

The natural grasslands and improved pastures of the Thompson-Nicola area support forage production and cattle ranching. Ginseng and other specialty operations are also suited to this area. Ginseng is becoming a major crop in this area with one of the larger operations in the country located near Merritt. Several smaller operations



also exist throughout the region. Ginseng products are sold mainly to the Asian markets, although there is a developing market in Canada. There is active investigation into and development of other specialty commodities in this area.

Cattle producers benefit from high quality range suitable for livestock grazing and feeding. There is a potential for growth in cattle backgrounding operations, which involve the feeding of younger animals to a more mature stage, for feeding in a feedlot. Some new feedlots have been established. Land tends to be relatively expensive in this area due to pressure for residential development, especially around major centers. The cost of land can be as much as double the provincial average. Availability of water for irrigation is also a problem in some areas. The region is very dry, and improvement of land by irrigation and the ongoing use of irrigation is costly.

In the future, the rising cost of transportation may decrease the amount of inexpensive, imported produce sold in the region. This could improve the economic viability of irrigating land, for production of more agricultural crops such as storage and fresh vegetables. There is a growing trend to direct marketing of some crops to the local population, particularly vegetables. Tourism and a growing population provide a large market for local production. Farms, orchards and vineyards are becoming more closely integrated with tourism activities in the region.

Food Processing

Food and beverage processors sold about 7% of the provincial total. A total of about 900 full-time jobs are supported by these manufacturers. The fruit and alcoholic-beverage processors are the largest employers and play a vital role in the grape and tree fruit industry. Successful fruit juice firms, and producers of other specialty fruit products that are by products of the fruit industry (sweets, jams, fruit leather) have been established.

Wineries in the region have steadily increased sales and the quality of BC-grown products. Wineries produce a competitive line of award-winning wines under the VQA label. VQA wines are produced in accordance with Vintner Quality

Alliance Standards that are 100% British Columbian. These wines are gaining international recognition. Estate wineries are usually small and producer-owned. They must produce wine made mostly from their own grapes.

The keys to continued growth and viability of the wine industry in BC are an aggressive marketing campaign and continued improvement of the quality of BC wines.



Selected Crop and Livestock Inventories (2011 Census)

Grains	6,500 ha
Corn for silage	3,344ha
Hay and Pasture	437,000 ha
Alfalfa	42,418 ha
Hay	61,162 ha
Potatoes	170 ha
Fruits, Berries and Nuts	9,598 ha
Field Grown Vegetables	887 ha
Nursery Products	709 ha
Sod	132 ha
Greenhouses	77,837 m ²
Christmas Trees	284 ha
Hens and Chickens	1,808,625
Cattle and Calves	171,000
Pigs	1,135

Sheep	13,603
Horses and Ponies	11,672
Rabbits	987
Goats	3,534

Estimated Gross Farm Receipts (2011 Census)

Community	Number of Farms	Gross Farm Receipts
Regional District of Central Okanagan	1,020	\$96,546,394
Columbia-Shuswap Regional District	616	\$52,619,759
Regional District of North Okanagan	1,167	\$126,150,927
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen	1,506	\$132,735,536
Thompson-Nicola Regional District	1,177	\$72,642,138