

INDUSTRY SIGNIFICANCE

The farming, fishing, and food and beverage processing industries are important contributors to the British Columbia economy. There are many people in BC involved in growing, harvesting, and processing food and non-food products for both local and global markets.

Agriculture, Fish, and Food Production in 2017

- BC's primary agricultural products generated receipts to farmers of more than \$3.2 billion.
- About 17,500 farms utilized 2.6 million hectares to grow more than 200 different commodities.
- The top 10 agriculture commodities in terms of farm cash receipts were dairy products, chickens, greenhouse vegetables, floriculture, beef, mushrooms, nursery products, eggs, blueberries, and sweet cherries.
- Total sales of primary seafood production in BC were \$1.18 billion in combined landed value (commercial fishing) and farm gate value (aquaculture).
- The commercial fishery harvest was 182,800 tonnes and generated a total landed value of \$410 million.
- The farm gate value of aquaculture production was \$768 million.
- There were 690 operations licensed to farm and approximately 2,400 vessels licensed to harvest the more than 100 species of finfish, shellfish, and marine plants in BC marine and fresh waters.
- The top 10 seafood commodities in terms of landed values were farmed Atlantic salmon, halibut, wild salmon, geoduck and other wild clams, crabs, prawns and shrimp, wild sablefish, herring, rockfish, and hake.

Retails Sales from Agri-food and Seafood Processing in 2017

- Combined revenues for the BC agri-food and seafood processing sectors (including primary production) totalled \$14.2 billion. Total revenues included \$3.2 billion from agriculture production, plus \$1.2 billion from aquaculture and commercial fisheries harvest, plus another \$9.8 billion in food and beverage processing sales.
- The top food and beverage sales were \$1.7 billion in “other food processing”; \$1.5 billion in meat and poultry products; \$1.2 billion in dairy products; \$1 billion in bakeries and tortillas; \$0.8 billion in animal food products; \$0.7 billion from breweries; \$0.7 billion from wineries; \$0.6 billion in fruit and vegetable products; and \$0.4 billion from soft drink and ice processing.
- Some 2,140 food processing establishments in BC utilized raw products to produce a wide variety of foods, and 659 establishments produced beverages and tobacco for the marketplace.

BC's Products Sold to Other Provinces and Countries in 2017

- BC exported \$2.6 billion of agri-food and \$1.3 billion of seafood products to 157 markets, for a total of \$3.9 billion.
- The top five agri-food export markets were the United States at \$2 billion (77%); China at \$139 million (5%); Japan at \$93 million (4%); South Korea at \$65 million (3%); and Hong Kong at \$34 million (1%).
- The top five seafood export markets were the United States at \$777 million (60%); China at \$257 million (20%); Japan at \$111 million (9%); Hong Kong at \$33 million (3%); and Ukraine at \$19 million (2%).
- The top five agri-food and seafood exports were \$512 million in farmed Atlantic salmon; \$329 million in food preparations for processing and natural health products; \$322 million in baked goods and cereal products; \$222 million in blueberries; and \$153 million in mushrooms.

Taking Care of British Columbia's Land and Water — Everybody's Responsibility

The provincial land area totals 92.5 million hectares, which is larger than many countries in the world, but less than 5% of that is suited to agricultural production. It's important that we make the best use of every available hectare and ensure its preservation in order to be able to produce food and other agricultural products for future generations.

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincially designated and protected area of land where agriculture is the priority use. This includes land that is privately owned, as well as land owned by the government (Crown land). The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is an independent administrative tribunal dedicated to preserving agricultural land and encouraging farming in British Columbia, which helps to ensure its availability for food production in the future.

Farmers today are using advanced techniques to make the best use of their land and reduce their footprint by:

- Using fewer chemicals to control weeds and pests through a program called [Integrated Pest Management](#).
- Using controlled methods to apply exact amounts of fertilizers needed to grow healthy crops, thus reducing waste.
- Formulating feed for all types of livestock and fish to ensure proper growth and reduced waste.

Producers continue to adopt new technologies and tools to better operate and manage their businesses, such as robots for milking cows and drones with sophisticated cameras for monitoring crops. There are even technological advancements that assist with managing pests and diseases and animal health. Social media tools can also enhance farmers' ability to access information, as well as help with their marketing efforts. These sophisticated, modern techniques being used by BC's farmers and processors help produce some of the best and highest quality food and agricultural products in the world.