
NEWS RELEASE

Census Says Agriculture is a Growing Economic Driver in British Columbia

Abbotsford, B.C. – June 23, 2022: Last week, Statistics Canada released new data from the [Census of Agriculture](#) that told readers that the agriculture sectors' contributions to the provincial economy are growing. Operating revenue in the province totalled \$4.8 billion in 2020 which is a significant increase over revenue in 2019 of \$3.9 billion.

“As we saw in 2020, farmers and ranchers rose to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and worked hard to make sure that British Columbians had high-quality, nutritious food on their tables, even during disruptions to global supply chains,” said Vander Waal. “The agriculture sector is going to be a key economic driver in a post-pandemic economy.”

In addition, the findings revealed that British Columbia continues to lead the country in the percentage of female farm operators with over 9,300 women running farms and ranches across the province. Women now make up 39% of farm operators in B.C., a slight increase over 2016. The province also reported the largest proportion of female farm operators between the ages of 35 and 54.

The number of B.C. farms with succession plans in place in 2021 grew by 3% but remains below the national average. “Letting go of control of the farm isn’t an easy decision for many farmers,” says Vander Waal. “Having recently started my own succession planning, the transition conversation about issues like money, retirement and death is never easy but this planning takes time and the sooner you start, the better.”

The data also indicated a concerning statistic that the amount of farmland in the province is shrinking with an 11.8% drop in total acres since 2016¹.

BCAC Executive Director, Danielle Synotte adds, “Farmland continues to face pressures from urban development and demand from other industries. With less than 5% of our province’s total land base dedicated to agriculture, all levels of government must focus on preventing further loss of farmland so that future generations of farmers and ranchers can continue to grow and raise food for British Columbians.”

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¹ [Statistics Canada: Land use, Census of Agriculture historical data](#)