



INTRODUCTION

Ensuring farmland sustainability is crucial. Agriculture is vulnerable to changes in climate conditions and even small shifts can have significant consequences for food production, the livelihoods of farmers, and the future of the agri-food sector in B.C.

THE ISSUE

The devastating impacts of adverse climate events in recent years, which include wildfires, heat domes, and flooding, demonstrate the need for coordinated action to address climate change and environmental sustainability. As stewards of the land, farmers and ranchers are particularly impacted by natural disasters but are also leaders in innovating and adapting to environmental and climate conditions. Actively engaging farmers and ranchers in the development of solutions is essential to ensuring the resilience of our society.

BACKGROUND

In recent years, farmers and ranchers throughout B.C. have been severely impacted by adverse climate events. Some of these agricultural producers have successfully rebuilt and regained their livelihoods, drawing upon their own resilience as well as valuable support from communities and governments. But further support for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts is needed to avoid the costly impacts of future wildfires, heat domes, floods, and other climate events. Governments must also consider the impact climate-related policies can have on food affordability and the financial viability of farming. Food security and production in the agricultural sector should be prioritized in policymaking over a singular focus on reducing emissions across the sector, particularly as more impactful emissions reductions can be achieved in other non-food producing segments of the economy.

Funded by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative, the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program provides farmers and ranchers with the means to identify agri-environmental risks and opportunities. In short, farmers who have an EFP are serious about learning how to reduce agriculture's impact on the environment. In B.C., the EFP is currently delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF). Programs like these will help farmers and ranchers continue a leading role in addressing climate change.

THE SOLUTION

The agriculture sector is seeking active engagement from all levels of government with farmers and ranchers to develop programs, policies, and infrastructure that mitigates the impact of adverse climate events on farmland, keeps food affordable for British Columbians, and protects the environment.



KEY POINTS

- Farmers and ranchers are stewards of the land, constantly adapting and innovating to ensure farmland sustainability.
- The vulnerability of farming to the effects of climate change has significant implications for food security.
- Policies and programs intended to address climate change should avoid increasing the typical costs associated with farmland operations or, where exemptions are not possible, include rebates that help farmers and ranchers keep food production affordable.

WHAT COULD GOVERNMENTS DO?

- Continue to support initiatives like the EFP program, which help farmers and ranchers take a leading role in addressing climate change and the environmental sustainability of agricultural production.
- Exempt activities essential to farm operations from carbon pricing mechanisms. This includes such activities as crop drying or CO2 enrichment in greenhouses.
- The Greenhouse Carbon Tax Relief Grant and other rebate programs must be continued if the B.C. agriculture sector is to remain competitive

WHAT IS BCAC DOING?

- Supporting the delivery of the EFP program by IAF and other programs that help farmers adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.
- Worked with the Government of B.C. on the development of the Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management.
- Supported the Government of B.C. in its Water Sustainability Act Modernization efforts and continues to facilitate feedback from farmers and ranchers on the province's envisioned Watershed Security Strategy and Fund.